

Fire and Rescue Sector Learning and Development Report 2011



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Foreword

The development of this new Learning and Development report (L&D report) provides an important and timely opportunity to reflect on past achievements and consider future opportunities and challenges.

It particularly builds on the change agenda of recent years - for example, the development and review of National Occupational Standards (NOS) and the implementation of the Local Authorities Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) which has already done much to enhance the delivery of learning, skills and qualifications.

The report identifies many drivers of change faced by the Fire and Rescue Sector (FRS). This includes the broadening range of services delivered by the FRS and the more recent economic pressures that have direct implications for service delivery and the availability of resources.

The pace of change not only offers challenges but also opportunities and these are explored in the development of the report. For example, new ways of delivering learning are offered by information technology and through working in partnership with organisations in other sectors.

It is vital that learning and development processes and opportunities keep pace with these changes. In this way, we can ensure that the FRS workforce is equipped with the knowledge, skills and competences they require. This would be important in any area of work, but in a risk critical environment such as the FRS it clearly has additional implications for the safety of workers and the communities they serve.

Not least, the availability of appropriate learning opportunities and career pathways are of vital importance to help meet the aspirations of the existing FRS workforce, and ensure the FRS remains attractive to future employees.

The development of this report has relied on the involvement of, and consultation with, numerous representatives of the FRS and related organisations. I would like to thank them for their support in this important initiative.



MAX HOOD,
CHAIR & CFOA LEAD OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE SECTOR OCCUPATIONAL COMMITTEE

Supported by



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Executive Summary

This L&D report was commissioned by Fire and Rescue Sector employers and key stakeholders, working closely with Skills for Justice, and the Fire and Rescue Sector Occupational Committee (FRSOC).

The Fire and Rescue Services Learning and Development Strategy for England was published in 2005, and similar strategies for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) were published in 2003 and 2007. During the time of developing this report, there have been significant changes in government policy, functions, services and broader operating environment of organisations within the United Kingdom (UK) FRS.

The purpose of the L&D report was to identify key drivers and challenges facing the sector. This was achieved in part by using a mixed-methods approach which included the deployment of a sector-wide skills survey and the conduct of seminars, conferences and discussions with stakeholders across the sector. The report supports the alignment of priorities and focuses on prevention, protection, response and also complements other skills and workforce development strategies. This L&D report is an inclusive document that highlights some of the learning and development interventions implemented by the FRS organisations particularly in the last decade. The report also offers horizon scanning on which to base future requirements.

There is considerable expectation that organisations within the sector will be better integrated, co-ordinated and community focused. In addition to better functioning with their local communities, fire services are also expected to work seamlessly with other emergency services to drive down numbers of population at risk of death or injury caused by fire and other tragedies.

Similarly, the pace of change within the external environment requires FRS organisations to:

- Strengthen their commitment to the health and safety
- Be able to attract and sustain multi-skilled workforces
- Be driven by transformational leadership
- Recognise the importance of equality and diversity demands
- Be operationally flexible and imbibe the tenets of environmental sustainability.

The challenging circumstances in which operational staff within the sector discharge their duties poses some concern about how FRS organisations can comply with health and safety legislation. This report draws upon principles and counsel from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to promote a culture where hazards are dealt with in a rational, balanced and cogent manner. The recommendations detailed in the recently published HSE consolidated report are re-emphasised in this report. These recommendations propose clear training and development directions on topical issues like breathing apparatus (BA), compartment fire behaviour (CFB), core skills training, incident command and the provision of risk critical information. FRS employers must continue to provide the best possible training to ensure that all staff maintain the tactical advantage to protect themselves and the public.

We recognise that skills and competences erode at varying rates in between refresher training periods. For risk critical operational functions, the significance of such erosion is greater; and there is a need across the sector for employers to take assurance from a sector-recognised refresher programme for risk critical operational functions. We feel that employers across the sector need to unite and support a national piece of robust research on the practice and sustainable future direction of risk critical activities and refresher time-scales.

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Executive Summary (continued)

The IPDS remains an important basis for ensuring that FRS organisations continue to deliver high quality services while at the same time driving corporate risk, risk to the health and safety of its workforce and of the public. Against this backdrop, there is a need to refocus, rebrand and re-embed the framework of the IPDS within the overall context of this new FRS L&D report, with a fundamental focus on sustaining safe and effective operations. Equally, NOS and Qualifications should remain as foundations of the IPDS Framework to enable members of staff to attain relevant skills and competences to deal with contingencies safely and effectively.

If FRS organisations wish to continue to meet the dynamic demands of their local communities, there is the need to imbibe innovative practices in their approach to learning. As employers continue to help their staff to grow and develop through blended learning that is customised and adapted to their skill requirements, they must also encourage self led development. The FRS workforce should be encouraged to take on additional responsibility to polish their skills in diverse ways. This could involve for example, making use of virtual learning, networking, joining auxiliary working groups or project teams where possible and partaking in research activities.

There are a wide range of bespoke programmes to support leadership across the FRS. The range of programmes and products will continue to expand as the sophistication of organisations across the sector grows. Such growth will also see many FRS organisations embrace structured approaches to managing talent. Leaders and members must be supported and encouraged to cultivate the ethos of continuous professional development alongside their staff.

Overall, we believe the FRS workforce make a mammoth contribution in helping to make our local communities safer. Our aspiration is to help all staff realise their potentials through effective learning and development. We are therefore committed to making sure every employee across the sector emerges with the right skills and competences to enable them to perform their current jobs effectively and prepare them, if necessary, for other future roles.



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1. Purpose of the FRS Learning and Development Report

Over the years, the functions and services delivered by the FRS workforce have become increasingly diverse. In addition to responding to fire-related emergencies and reducing the number of deaths, injuries and property damage caused by fire, the FRS also engages in emergency planning and response to accidents like road, rail and air crashes; coastal pollution; severe floods; terrorist attacks; chemical, biological and radiological incidents. Fire and Rescue Services also rescue people who are trapped in buildings and lifts.

There is also an increasing requirement across the sector for collaborative working with other emergency Services, Category 1 and Category 2 responders, Local Authorities and other organisations within the Justice and Community Safety sector. Such collaborative working places a demand on the FRS workforce to learn to gather and share intelligence and especially, to contribute effectively to local development planning, implementation and monitoring.

These emerging issues require new approaches to learning, training and workforce development if the sector is to achieve its aspirations for employers, employees and the diverse communities it serves.

The FRS aims to attract, develop and promote the best talent and create a supportive environment in which staff can learn and broaden their knowledge and expertise. This report sets out how investment in learning and development will support the achievement of these aspirations.

An important aspiration of the FRS is for employers and individuals within the sector to assume responsibility for performance improvement.¹ This report recognises this and the importance of determining where resources need to be deployed. It also seeks to complement the priorities set out in the National Framework and support the strategic vision of the FRS.

This report seeks to promote shared working principles across the sector. However, we recognise that the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS), Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP), FRS qualifications and different leadership models may not apply to all organisations within the sector.

¹ The Fire Service College (2005), National Fire and Rescue Service Learning and Development Strategy for England



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1.1. Vision

In developing this report, a Task and Finish Group representing a broad spectrum of stakeholders was set up. Members of the Group are listed in Appendix 1. The Task and Finish Group determined that the vision should be clear and align itself to the development needs of everyone within the Sector at local, regional and national level. The vision is:

To develop a Sector-led Learning and Development Report that reflects the needs of employers and captures the learning and development requirements of their workforce.

The FRS L&D Report will help raise performance and skills across all FRS functions to meet service needs by ensuring the Sector provides an effective framework for people development, supported through IPDS.

1.2. Objectives

A number of operational assessments undertaken throughout the review process have identified the importance of the training and development of staff.¹ This can be further evidenced by the recently published Health and Safety Executive (HSE) consolidated report.² Learning and Development provides Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) with a pool of appropriately skilled staff, able to drive the FRS towards meeting its objectives.

Each FRS organisation has to ensure it can effectively deliver the IRMP³ and this requires an appropriately skilled workforce. The learning and development of staff must of necessity align with the skills required to deliver the IRMP. Each IRMP has its own local constructs, and as such an individual FRS approach to learning and development should reflect those individual constructs.

There are however some common aspects of general service delivery, particularly around risk critical operations and effective health and safety management, where a consistent approach to standards of competence will be a significant control measure to corporate

risk. The utilisation of benchmark standards such as such as delivery of risk critical training to consistent, common and national standards across the FRS;

National Occupational Standards (NOS); and Qualifications and Professional Registration schemes will enable consistent assurance to be obtained in key areas of competence. In order to achieve the overall vision, this FRS L&D Report seeks to:

- Support a sector-led and common vision to learning and development
- Support Fire and Rescue Services to deliver the correct balance of prevention, protection, response under operational conditions and in community planning activities
- Support the development of a safe and skilled workforce
- Support partnership working and increased inter-agency working
- Contribute to performance improvement
- Support the ongoing achievement of “best value” service delivery
- Enable fire services to achieve and maintain consistent quality standards
- Strengthen the approach to leadership and management
- Promote existing and emerging good practice
- Embed the Sector Qualifications Strategy and accredit work-based learning
- Develop a knowledge base within the UK FRS
- Quality assure learning and development programmes
- Support equality and diversity across the Fire and Rescue sector.

A Sector-led L&D Report will reflect the needs of the FRS and capture the current and future learning and development requirements of the workforce. It will also provide good practice solutions for the Sector to consider, so that individuals emerge with the right skills and competencies to enable them perform their current job effectively and prepare them, if necessary for other roles.

¹ Department for Communities and Local Government (2007), Fire and Rescue Operational Assessment of Service Delivery

² Health and Safety Executive (2010), The Management of Health and Safety in the GB Fire and Rescue Service: Consolidated Report Based on the 8 Inspections Completed by HSE In 2009/10

³ Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) Identifies existing risks within the community; Evaluates the effectiveness of current service resources, strategies, practices and procedures and their impact on lowering the risk; Determines what new strategies, policies, procedures, standards and activities are required to drive down risk; determines the service resource requirements; and identifies the workforce profile.

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2. Background

The United Kingdom (UK) FRS is made up of an array of talents and vocations spread across the public and private sectors. The sector operates in a number of different ways throughout the UK. There are currently Fire and Rescue Services operated by 58 Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) established by statute; the Defence Fire Risk Management Service; private and specialist brigades operating around airports, and the nuclear and petroleum industries. Fire and Rescue Services include operational staff, control room staff, managers, specialists, other professionals and other support staff. There are approximately 71,453 people working across the sector in the UK.

Statistics sourced from the most recent labour force survey indicate that:

- About 81% of the UK FRS workforce is located in England
- Scotland comprises 12% of the UK FRS workforce
- Wales has a percentage share of about 4% of the total workforce
- Northern Ireland comprises 3% the UK FRS workforce.

Table 2.1 below illustrates the different organisations that operate across the sector. Local Authority Fire Services operate under devolved arrangements in each nation of the UK.²

Table 2.1: Fire and Rescue Employer Organisations Operating Across the United Kingdom

County	Public sector	Private Sector
England	46 Fire and Rescue Services, run by locally accountable Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA) – lead Government Department for Communities and Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport Fire Services (e.g. BAA, and other non BAA airports, regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority) • Port Fire Services (e.g. Port of Felixstowe) • Industrial Fire Services (e.g. in chemical, pharmaceutical, nuclear, oil and gas industries) • Specialist private service firms
Wales	Wales 3 Fire and Rescue Services, run by locally accountable Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA) – accountable to the Welsh Assembly Government	
Scotland	8 Fire and Rescue Services, run by Scottish Fire and Rescue Authorities (SFRA) – accountable to the Scottish Government. ¹	
Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service in Northern Ireland (NIFRS) divided into 4 area commands – accountable to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.	
Crown Dependencies	Fire and Rescue Services in Jersey, Guernsey and Isle of Man	
Other	Ministry of Defence (e.g. Royal Navy Fire Fighting Training Centre) Defence Fire Risk Management Organisation	

Source: Skills for Justice, Labour Market Information Report, FRS Strand 2007-2008

¹ Due to reform in Scotland, the number of Fire and Rescue Services are currently under review. There are considerations for the 8 Services to be merged into a single Fire and Rescue Service.

² It is important to stress that not all Airport Fire Services are represented by Skills for Justice. Some specific airport related occupational standards and qualifications are dealt with by GoSkills (The Sector Skills Council for passenger transport) but linked to the FRS equivalents.

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In 2005, the National Fire and Rescue Service L&D Strategy for England was jointly launched by the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the Fire Service College, the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) and Local Government Association (LGA).

Good progress was achieved by the Centre for Leadership in respect of a number of learning and development products, including the Executive Leadership Programme. CFOA have also adopted and embedded outcomes and actions from the strategy within their HR Business Plan and wider CFOA Business Plan.

The strategy was originally intended to last for ten years. However since its publication, there have been significant changes in the dynamics and nature of drivers of learning within the sector. It now seems an appropriate mid-way point to reflect on achievements of the 2005 strategy and review the future learning direction in what is a very different political, economic, social and environmental context for the next three to five years.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) released its first L&D Strategy in 2003. The strategy was subsequently amended four years later in 2007. The development and delivery of the SFRS L&D Strategy through a partnership arrangement between the Scottish Executive and CFOA(S) is perhaps more cohesive than its English counterpart and provides useful lessons for the future development and delivery of L&D Strategy and/or core principles therein.

2.1. Strategic Requirements of the Fire and Rescue Sector

The different service providers within the sector share multiple common principles. Some of these principles include:

- They all operate in a risk critical environment
- They all rely on similar safe systems of work and use of the safe person concept
- They all rely upon and use the National Occupations Standards (NOS)
- They all engage with Skills for Justice (SfJ), the Sector Skills Council and Standards Setting Body for the UK Justice and Community Safety sector.

Partnership working, as evidenced by shared workforce issues, also means that the FRS continues to engage and strengthen links with partners like the LGA, the CFOA and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

A number of topical issues some of which are identified in the Local Government Workforce Strategy¹ are important for consideration when discussing the strategic priorities of the FRS. These include:

Workforce Safety

- While reducing risks within communities, strive to prevent loss of lives and injuries to the workforce.

Leadership Development

- Building visionary, ambitious and effective leadership to make the best use of political and managerial roles, in a partnership context.

Organisational Development

- Addressing the workforce dimensions of organisational transformation to deliver citizen-focused and value for money services, in partnership.

Skills Development

- With partners, developing employees' skills and knowledge, in an innovative, high performance, multi-agency context.

Recruitment and Retention

- With partners, taking action to: recruit and retain the right workforce; address key future and occupational skill shortages; promote jobs and careers; identify, develop and motivate talent and address diversity issues.

¹ Local Government Association Group (2010), Delivering Through People: The Local Government Workforce Strategy

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The 2008-2011 National Framework also discusses the priorities in England around four themes.¹

- Prevention, protection and response
- Resilience
- Diversity and workforce development
- Governance and improvement

Over the years, these priorities are likely to be influenced and transformed by competing political, economic, social and environmental demands. The implications of such drivers, especially in the context of learning and development, are discussed in greater detail in the third section of this report.

The CFOA National Human Resource (HR) Strategy² submitted that the primary purpose of Fire and Rescue Services is:

‘To help build a safer society and a sustainable community by working in partnership with others to promote community well being, whilst reducing death and injury, damage to property and damage to the environment from fire and other emergencies

The focus of the four priorities outlined in the National Framework is in harmony with objectives listed in the CFOA HR Strategy.

According to the strategy, the first and second priorities of a modern Fire and Rescue Service are:

- The requirement to work with local communities and other agencies to promote community safety and community well being, and to sustain those communities by reducing risks to life, property and the environment from fire and other emergencies
- The requirement to intervene promptly and effectively when fire and other emergencies occur.

These two priorities underscore the meaning and significance of prevention, protection and response which is the first priority listed in the National Framework.

Central to the business activities of FRAs is the analysis of risks, and the implementation of actions which meet and mitigate the effect of those risks. The IRMP is a core part of the prevention, protection and response agenda.

The two priorities above also have links with the Fire and Rescue Service resilience agenda. The agenda is partly aimed at providing the capability to withstand ‘the largest risks such as terrorist attacks, chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear explosives (CBRNE) incidents or major disasters including flooding’.

¹ Department for Communities and Local Government (2008), Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008–11
² Chief Fire Officers Association (2006), Fire And Rescue Service CFOA National HR Strategy

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The CFOA HR Strategy is also interested in ensuring that Fire and Rescue Services:

- Have a well equipped, skilled and motivated workforce able to work safely and whose composition reflects the diverse communities served.

Again this priority aligns itself with the diversity and workforce development agenda contained in the National Framework. The diversity and workforce development agenda seeks to recruit people with the right skills and potential; develop them to realise that potential; support them by ensuring they are valued, treated fairly and with respect; and provide them with equality of opportunity to progress.

The CFOA HR Strategy also recognises the need for Fire and Rescue Services to:

- Pursue continuous improvement in all its functions in order to deliver best value and make efficient use of resources.

This priority is again congruent with the programme of governance and improvement contained in the National Framework.

Evidence from these themes and priorities highlights the need for effective people management, workforce planning and development. This has specific significance for the FRS in the context of embedding the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) within the broader learning and development agenda.



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2.2 Learning Practices and the Integrated Personal Development System

The FRS partnership agreement between Skills for Justice (SfJ) and the DCLG; the Scottish Government; the Welsh Assembly Government; the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service; the Defence Fire Risk Management Organisation (DFRM); and the Joint Occupational Industrial Fire Forum (JOIFF) has helped strengthen the learning and development dynamics of the FRS on a number of fronts. These include:

- Helping the FRS to meet current and future challenges and support the shift from being primarily an emergency response service, to being both an emergency response and a community safety service
- Improving performance and support organisational and cultural change
- Encouraging collaboration and partnership working
- Supporting equality and diversity
- Enabling individuals to maximise their personal potentials.

The Sector Qualifications Strategy (SQS) which was published in 2010 has been very well received across the sector. The SQS provides a comprehensive overview of the qualifications and learning provision relevant to the FRS and the context within which such qualifications are used.¹

Prior to the publication of the SQS, a survey of stakeholders was conducted to determine the range of provision currently available for qualifications and learning programmes within the FRS. Findings from the consultation revealed that combinations of the following types of provisions are being used:

- In-house provision
- Further and higher education institutions
- Professional bodies
- Fire Service College
- Other specialist providers²

The SQS has been developed in concert with the Sector Skills Agreements (SSAs) process. Through these agreements, Sector Skills Councils like Skills for Justice identify the skills requirements within the sector, appraise current provisions and agree strategic interventions with partners. Key remits of the SQS are embedded within this report by outlining current and future learning needs of employers and employees within the sector.

Based on agreed performance standards, the IPDS provides the FRS with a structure that can be used to identify, attract, assess and develop their workforce to discharge their current and future roles.³ The IPDS offers the FRS a structured framework to train and develop operational staff, control room staff, managers, specialists, other professionals and other support staff to meet the dynamic and changing needs of the sector.

The IPDS encapsulates eight key components.

- National Occupational Standards
- Awards (NVQs)
- Assessment Development Centres (ADCs)
- Assessment Workplace Performance
- Development Programmes
- Personal Development Records
- Continuing Personal Development
- Quality Assurance

¹ Skills for Justice (2010), Fire and Rescue Sector Qualifications Strategy

² Other specialist providers could include: Civil Aviation Authority approved training providers (for Fire & Rescue services at airports); Specialist providers overseas; and external consultants. The FRS also uses the Emergency Planning College for some specialist course.

³ Department for Communities and Local Government (2009), Integrated Personal Development System Code of Practice.

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Figure 2.1: How the Components of the IPDS Fit Together

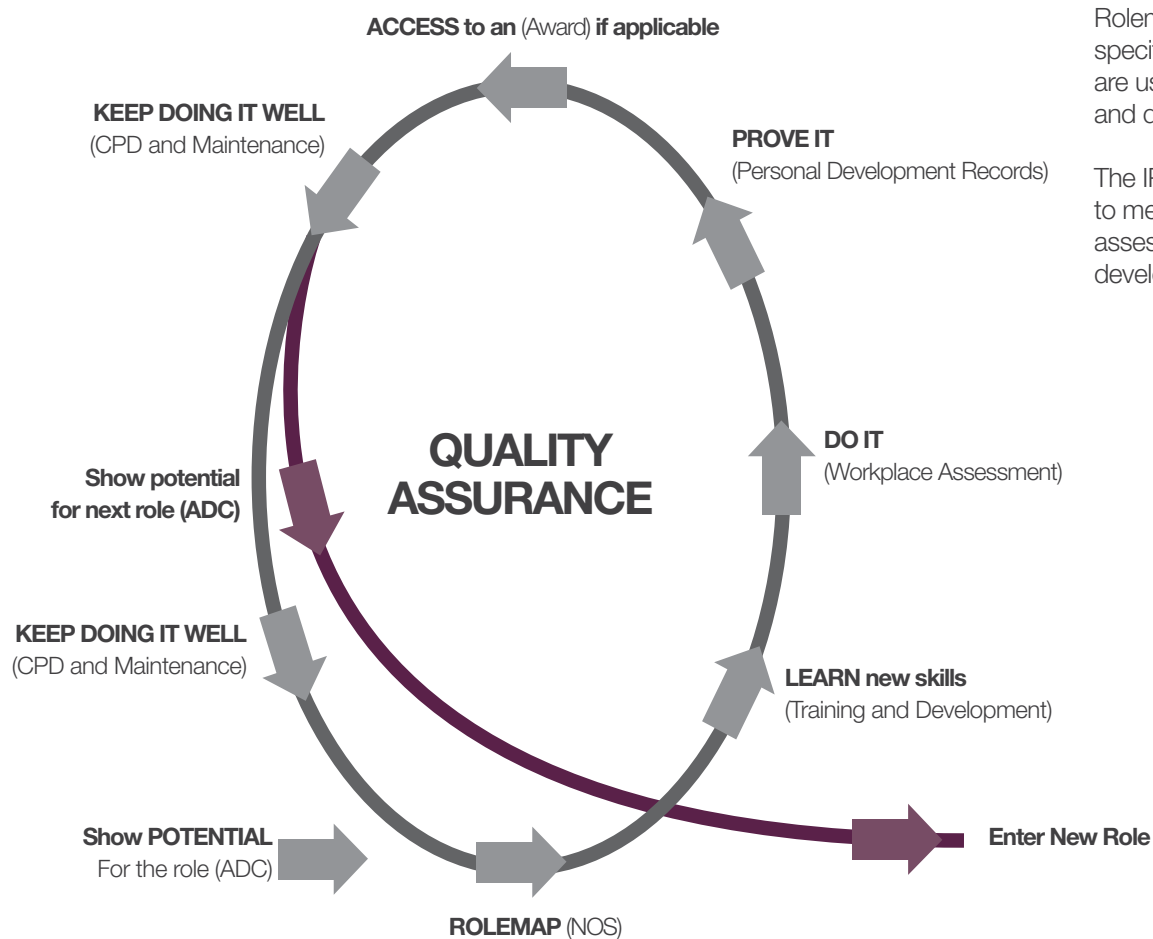


Figure 2.1 shows how the different components of the IPDS are linked together and how an individual can move from one part of the system to another.

Rolemaps are fundamental elements of the IPDS. They are underpinned by NOS for specific functions and the relevant training and development modules for the roles. They are used to support a competency based personnel management approach to training and development within the sector.

The IPDS offers the FRS a framework to help identify, assess and develop their employees to meet the changing demands of the sector. It also enables individual employees to assess their development needs against a set of NOS and seek appropriate training and development opportunities.

Adapted from: DCLG, 2009, Integrated Personal Development System: Moving On

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Following a meeting of the IPDS Workstream Group (IPDSWSG) held in November 2010, it was established that the IPDS could evolve into a sector-led and sector-owned framework of broad principles which could be applied consistently whilst being flexible enough to allow for local variation to meet particular needs. This presents a number of opportunities for learning and development which include the chance to:

- Refocus, rebrand and re-embed the framework within the overall context of the new sector L&D report, with a fundamental focus on supporting safe and effective operations
- Develop the framework in a way which could present for the first time a clear, single set of broad principles for the sector whilst allowing for appropriate variations in practice, including between individual Fire and Rescue Services in England and between those in England and the devolved administrations
- Develop the framework in a way that could be more easily applied to non Grey/Gold Book roles
- Develop the framework in a way that could be more easily applied sector-wide (i.e. to non public FRS organisations) in addition to recognising the specific provisions and application of the principles incorporated into NJC terms and conditions of service for uniformed roles in public services
- Create the conditions, support and mechanisms for greater collaboration and exchange of best practice between FRS organisations across the whole range of component parts of the framework
- Utilise the resources, skills and expertise of the Sector Skills Council to support the sector in developing the framework in a range of ways which would maximise the benefit of continued membership.

Central to the IPDS framework is the requirement to meet the needs of the IRMP, the promotion of equality for every person and a focus on improving the health and safety of all members of staff.

The IPDS has been developed as an ongoing process. Each FRS role is defined within a role description showing what is expected in terms of technical and personal skills. Some of the key components of the IPDS are further discussed in this section.



“A great deal has changed within the fire and rescue sector since the introduction of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) and the publication of the previous Learning and Development Strategies. This timely Report provides a comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the current issues and priorities for learning and development across fire and rescue service organisations and identifies a clear direction to guide the work of the IPDS Workstream, along with all other key stakeholders, in developing refreshed and refocused frameworks to meet the workforce and organisational development needs of the sector now and into the future.”

JULIAN SEARS
ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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National Occupational Standards (NOS)

National Occupational Standards (NOS) are primarily used by organisations within the FRS to describe safety and competence standards of their workforce. The NOS describe proficient performance in terms of the outcomes of an individual's work. This is achieved by describing what the individual needs to be able to do, as well as what they need to know and understand. Figure 2.2 is a diagrammatic illustration of some of the ways in which NOS help to add additional value to the FRS workforce.

Figure 2.2: How NOS Add Value to the FRS Workforce



NOS¹ are presented as functions or competencies which contain information on:

- Outcomes of effective performance which describe the performance level required for the particular unit
- Knowledge and understanding which describes the essential level of awareness required for the unit.

NOS are usually introduced with a summary which explains the standard; describes who the standard is aimed at; and summarises how it links to other NOS and how it fits into the N/SVQ framework.

A strong benefit of grouping together NOS units is that it allows for the specification of the full range of performance, knowledge and skills required to function effectively on a particular job. NOS are often partitioned into two or more elements which allow for extensive description of the activities an individual is expected to carry out. Each element encapsulates clear performance criteria which describe what effective workers do and the standards of quality they achieve. Understanding such clear performance criteria is considered important in this report as it will enable learning and development outcomes to be effectively monitored against shared principles.

It is also imperative to understand that NOS often spell out a range of circumstances that might have critical impact on an activity. This enables individuals to have an awareness of different contingences which they could face. This is absolutely vital particularly for the FRS operational workforce as they engage in risk critical activities. Each NOS usually carries a statement of evidence requirements - this is the evidence that candidates need to submit to be assessed as competent for N/SVQs.

¹ For comprehensive information about the NOS and how they work, please visit the Skills for Justice website at www.skillsforjustice.com

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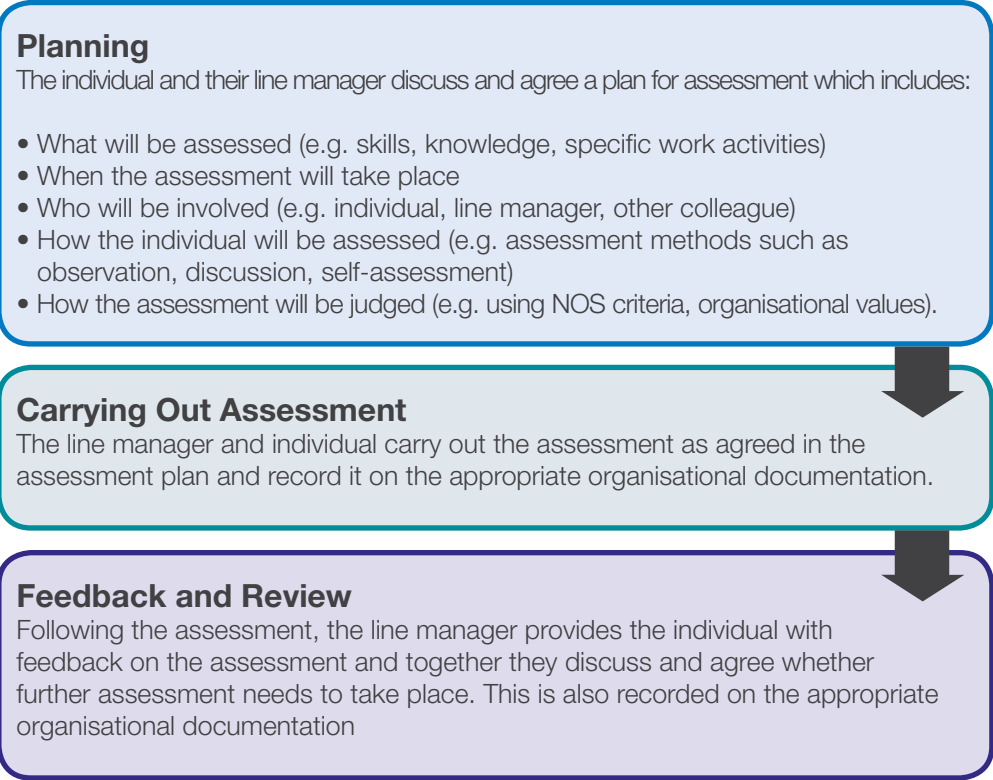
Emerging recommendations from the IPDSWSG propose that:

- NOS should remain as a foundation of the IPDS Framework
- NOS are extensively used to support the development of Vocational Qualifications (VQs)
- NOS maintenance and development is essential to ensure the framework remains up-to-date and relevant
- NOS underpin the National Fire and Rescue Services Rolemaps, agreed by Local Government Employers/National Joint Council (LGE/NJC)
- National Rolemaps for Grey/Gold book staff in local authorities are exclusively the remit of the LGE/NJC and as such, only they can make changes to the National FRS Rolemaps
- The IPDS framework remains broad enough to encompass this specific case and also support the wider use of NOS by local FRS organisations across a full range of activities to support individual and organisational development
- NOS can also be used in a variety of ways to help design and map job description, specialist roles and staff.

These recommendations underscore the significance of the IPDS framework to learning across the sector and why it is embedded in learning and development.

NOS can also be used to support assessment processes within all Human Resource (HR) processes. The diagram in Figure 2.3 shows the general principles of assessment and how NOS can be used to adapt these for specific HR processes such as performance management.

Figure 2.3: How NOS Can Be Used to Support the Assessment Process



The development of firefighters against NOS is a priority emphasised in this report as NOS provide a basis for reviewing existing programmes and developing new ones. The NOS are critical for ensuring that programmes are delivered to nationally recognised levels in line with role requirements. In addition to supporting the assessment process, NOS also form the basis of qualifications, most commonly National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs).

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Qualifications

As part of the introduction of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), the structure and design of qualifications across England, Wales and Northern Ireland are changing. The new QCF will be made up of units¹ and will help present qualifications in a way that is easy to understand and measure.

For learners, the QCF will:

- Offer more freedom, choice and flexibility
- Give easy access to information about the commitment needed for different routes to achievement, enabling learners to balance that commitment with family, work and other responsibilities
- Allow them to build up credits at their own pace and combine them in a way that will help them get where they want to be
- Enable them to transfer credits between qualifications to avoid having to repeat their learning
- Record all their achievements on an electronic learner record, encouraging them and others to value their past achievements

For employers, the QCF will:

- Help them to measure quickly the level and size of achievements of prospective employees
- Enable them to get in-house training recognised within a national framework
- Describe levels of achievement in terms everyone can understand
- Make training options and pathways clear, helping employees and employers find the right training for their learning and business needs

For learning providers, the QCF will:

- Enable them to design more flexible programmes, suitable to the individual needs of learners
- Help them improve retention and progression rates by recognising smaller steps of achievement more frequently
- Track all learners' achievements through the use of a Unique Learner Number (ULN) and an individual's electronic learner record, giving providers standard information about each learner's past achievements
- Help them describe achievements to employers and learners in a language that is easy to understand

In Scotland, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)² helps promote lifelong learning across the SFRS. Through the Framework the SFRS workforce can gain a better understanding of qualifications in Scotland and plan their future learning. The Framework supports everyone in Scotland, including learners, learning providers and employers, by:

- Helping people of all ages and circumstances access appropriate education and training so they can meet their full potential
- Helping employers, learners and the general public to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications, how qualifications relate to each other and to other forms of learning, and how different types of qualification can contribute to improving the skills of the workforce.

¹ QCF Units are made up of a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria with a title, credit value and level. They will be assessed independently and this means that learners, employers and learning providers will have much more flexibility to combine units in different ways and create programmes tailored to their particular personal, social or employment needs.

² For more information on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, visit this web link <http://www.scqf.org.uk/Home/home.aspx>.

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National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) help to show that an individual has the knowledge, abilities and skills to actually carry out their work.¹ This is demonstrated through evidence provided by the candidate, as well as observations from an assessor.

Vocational Qualifications (VQs) focus on assessing and recognising knowledge and understanding. They are usually delivered through a taught programme and have a work placement running alongside.

Some of the NVQs and SVQs developed and used within the FRS include:

- N/SVQ in Emergency Fire Services Operations in the Community Level 3
- N/SVQ in Emergency Fire Service Control Operations Level 3
- N/SVQ in Emergency Fire Services Watch Management Level 3

Recent recommendations of the IPDSWSG with regard to qualifications propose that:

- The continuing implementation and development of the Sector Qualifications Strategy to provide qualifications which meet FRS needs and promote their uptake should remain a fundamental component of the framework of principles
- Ongoing work of the NOS & Qualifications Workstream Group and the Marketing & Communications Workstream Group in taking the Qualifications Strategy forward and in communicating and promoting the benefits of qualifications to services is therefore critically important to the effective operation of the framework (and particularly in relation to safety-critical operational areas of working)
- The sector must try to engage with younger people and the workforce will require skills to enable this to happen
- The framework of principles and guidance should cover best practice in the use of content of QCF units in design of training and development (i.e. in addition to NOS themselves).



“The Learning and Development Report has been underpinned by extensive research which has identified many of the internal and external factors driving change in the fire and rescue sector. As such it should be the catalyst for learning and development for the whole sector which will in turn assist individual employers to address the longer-term development needs of their staff.”

RICHARD HANNIGAN
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

¹ Further information on NVQs and SVQs can be accessed from the Skills for Justice website (<http://www.skillsforjustice-nosfinder.com/qualifications.php>) and the Scottish Fire Service College (<http://www.scottish-fireservicescollege.org/sfscfront/>)

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Assessments

Effective assessment is important to an organisation, as it needs to know that it has selected the most appropriate individuals for roles and that they are performing to the required standard. Assessment plays a crucial role in most organisational HR processes particularly performance management and selection.

Assessment that is carried out in the workplace should be rigorous and robust but should be integrated with existing organisational procedures so as not to place an additional burden on individuals and their managers.

The aim of VQs assessment is to establish whether a candidate can perform to the NOS across a range of circumstances and meet changing demands.

Assessments are fundamental in boosting confidence across the workforce. The employee's confidence is enhanced because they know they possess the skills, knowledge and experience recognised by a national set of qualifications. Team confidence is also boosted because colleagues can depend on one another. Supervisors and employers are also greatly encouraged as members of their teams and workforce can perform competently in different scenarios. Assessments also help re-assure the public that the FRS workforce comprises qualified and competent professionals.

Assessment has been associated with National Occupational Standards for a number of years, particularly in relation to qualifications such as NVQs. This formal type of summative assessment is one way that the NOS can be used but they can also be used as part of ongoing formative assessment in the workplace. The NOS assist with the assessment process as they describe the expected outcome of performance.

Assessment is essential in the HR process as it is a way of measuring whether or not the outcomes / objectives have been achieved. The NOS can be used to objectively assess an individual against key activities. Using NOS in HR processes can help the organisation to ensure that it uses a system that is objective and consistent and does not discriminate against individual candidates. Assessment can be carried out in a numbers of ways such as:

- Observation
- Group activities
- Written / oral answers to questions
- Role plays
- Simulation
- Discussion
- Presentations
- Review of work products
- Projects
- Psychometric testing
- Interviews

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Case Study 1: Wholetime Trainee Firefighter Assessment and Development Log

In order to aid the development of a Trainee Firefighter, the Trainee Firefighter Assessment and Development Log (TFFADL) has been developed. It has been designed to structure the way in which trainees can achieve the goal of becoming competent firefighters.

The TFFADL runs in conjunction with the Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Maintenance Phase Development Plan (MPDP). It utilises the 46 advanced Firefighting Modules over a 3-year development period. Satisfactory completion of this log will ensure that all trainees receive a sound foundation in the practical skills, knowledge and understanding required to successfully and safely resolve the range of incidents faced by the modern Fire and Rescue Service.

A trainee commences their personal development alongside the other watch members by following Strathclyde's Maintenance Phase Development Plan (MPDP). Trainees who are at different career levels on the same watch can progress their development without the need to deviate from the watch-based training.

The trainee will have to demonstrate technical knowledge or a practical skill before a watch officer can sign off an element as satisfactory. It is the trainee's responsibility to source and assimilate the relevant information asked for within the direct learning sheets.

Typical sources of information will be from service Operational/Technical notes, fire service manuals, service policies/procedures and the Learning Content Management System (LCMS) e-modules.

In addition, 19 of the 46 modules have been designated nationally as mandatory modules and as such, trainees, participating with their watch colleagues on the MPDP, are required to consistently record/reflect their participation in these subject areas. These "Reflective Journals" will be maintained throughout the development period. This maximises and reinforces learning opportunities over the 3-year development period.

Trainee Practical Assessments – Within the log, there are direct learning worksheets to enable the trainee to prepare for each assessment phase. Each sheet provides a prescriptive explanation of the activities that are to be demonstrated.

The induction and formal assessments have been arranged to coincide with the trainees having completed approximately 12, 24 and 33 months service. They have been graduated in their complexity to reflect the appropriate skill level expected at that particular stage of a trainee firefighter's career.

These assessments are referred to as:

- Red Phase Assessment Induction (12 month) – This is the first time a trainee is exposed to assessment and designed to be an introduction into the formal assessment programme
- Amber Phase Formal Assessment (24 month) – This assessment ensures that the required standards have been attained by trainees and involves combination drills
- Green Phase Formal Assessments (33 month) – This involves the trainee demonstrating, in a series of fire ground simulations, the core skill requirements of a competent firefighter.

The assessments are held at a central location by independent A1 qualified assessors.

The TFFADL provides a consistent and structured approach to the development of trainees up until they successfully complete their development period.

On completion of the assessment, any areas of development that require to be addressed will be detailed within the log. Identified development needs are categorised as minor or major and structured processes are in place to ensure the required level of support (with defined timescales) is given.

Successful completion of the TFFADL, Red, Amber and Green Phase Assessments and the 19 reflective journals will provide contributory evidence towards the SVQ Level 3 Operations in the community.

Source: The Chief Fire Officers' Association

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3. Drivers of Change within the FRS L&D Context

Up until this point, this report has provided some background into current learning and development practices within the FRS. However it is important to evaluate how learning is likely to change within the sector as it responds to trends and developments in the near future.

It is imperative to consider the major forces that will stimulate change and their implications for learning and development within the FRS. For the FRS L&D report, a ‘driver’ of change is a factor that has the potential to influence learning and development within the sector.

During the development of this report, a systematic approach to understanding the factors that are likely to influence learning within the sector was undertaken. The Skills Survey which is covered extensively in Section 5 was used to gather preliminary numerical information. In November 2010, a meeting of L&D Managers was held at the Fire Service College. The meeting provided the opportunity to derive further qualitative information on drivers of change from more than 70 participants spread across the FRS.

The key drivers have been categorised under six headings using the traditional PESTEL. These are:

- Political Drivers
- Economic Drivers
- Social Drivers
- Technological Drivers
- Environmental Drivers
- Legal Drivers

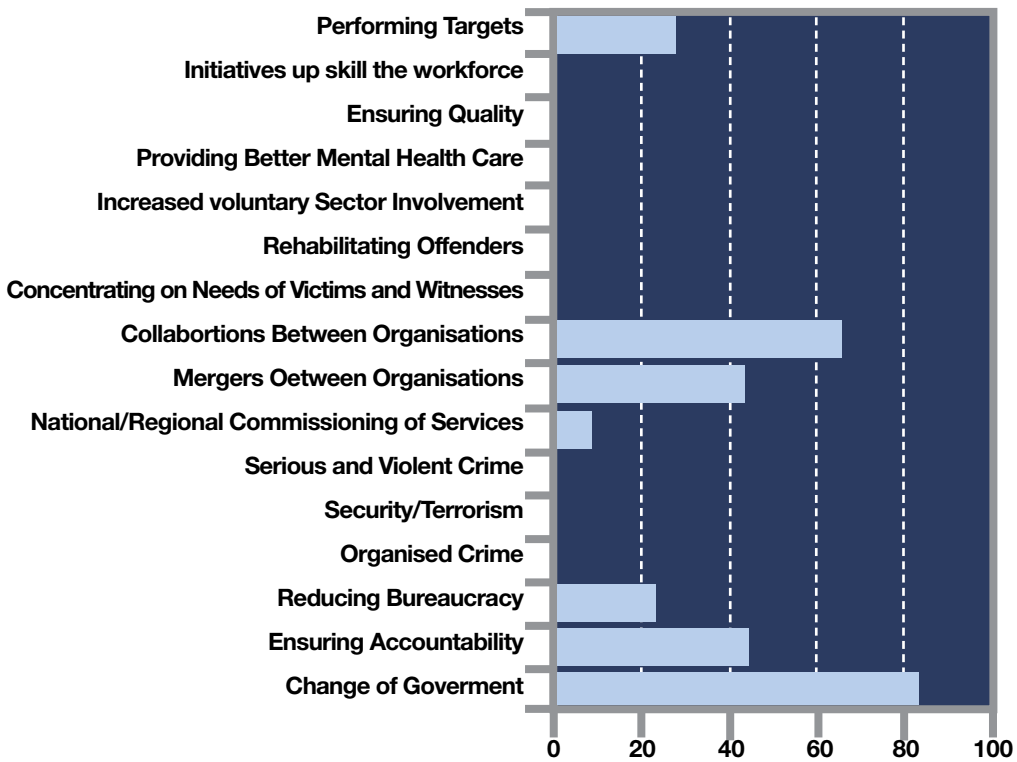
This section discusses each of these topics in greater detail.

3.1. Political Drivers

The FRS need to be fully aware of political developments within the UK and the potential impact that a change of policy direction can bring on learning activities across the sector.

Respondents to the 2010 skills survey conducted by Skills for Justice were asked for their views on the political drivers that are likely to impact on learning and development across the sector going forward. Figure 3.1 shows the pattern of answers from the respondents.

Figure 3.1: Political Drivers of FRS Learning and Development



Source: Skills for Justice Employers Skills Survey, 2010

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The most important issue of concern is the recent change in government. Out of all respondents, 86% feel the change in government will have the greatest political implications for learning and development across the sector. A large proportion of all respondents (64%) also believe the need for organisations to better collaborate will have its impact on the way learning and development activities are carried out across the sector.

Other political drivers which the respondents feel will impact on learning and development include:

- Ensuring accountability (43% of all respondents)
- The potential need for mergers between organisations (43% of all respondents)
- The requirement for organisations to perform to set targets (29% of all respondents)
- The requirement for organisations to reduce bureaucracy (21% of all respondents)
- The process for commissioning services at national or regional levels (7% of all respondents).

It is also pertinent to realise that early policy announcements from the government and the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)¹ may give rise to new political drivers which will challenge and shape learning and development within the sector.²

The localism agenda proposed in the Localism Bill³ is one of the key priorities of the new government. The Bill seeks to make Fire and Rescue Authorities more transparent and more accountable in their decision making. In the future, decisions may be dispersed to locally elected representatives of councils. An argument for this approach is that local citizens are better informed on how to spend local money in the present era of austerity. One of the challenges the Localism Bill may present to the FRS is that we could see single issue groups attempting to drive local FRS agenda. It is important therefore to equip leaders to manage such developments.

3.2. Economic Drivers

Following the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), budgets across most sectors face enormous reductions. Citizens, communities and independent service providers are expected to play greater roles in the shaping of public services.⁴ One of the initiatives of the government is the Big Society which is underpinned by principles seeking to build a society where everyone is responsible.

Over the next spending period, significant savings are expected to be made particularly within the public sector. This is not peculiar to the FRS. As a result, it is by no means surprising that service providers within the FRS are already reviewing their roles and services.

The FRS expects a 13% reduction in fire resource expenditure across the board. Within this, central government grants to local authorities will be reduced by 25% over the period. Individual Fire Authorities will have to decide how to make these savings.

Uncertain economic circumstances have a tendency not only to directly impact on workloads but also indirectly through the knock-on effect of things such as budgetary allocations to learning and skills development. This is further evidenced in the statement below taken from the recent Fire Futures report on efficiency, effectiveness and productivity.⁵

¹ HM Treasury (2010), Spending Review 2010
² Cabinet Office (2010), The Coalition: Our programme for Government
³ The Localism Bill will devolve greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities more control over housing and planning decisions. More details on the Bill can be accessed via this web link: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/localism.html>.
⁴ HM Treasury (2010), Spending Review 2010
⁵ Department for Communities and Local Government (2010) Fire Futures: Efficiency, Effectiveness and Productivity Report

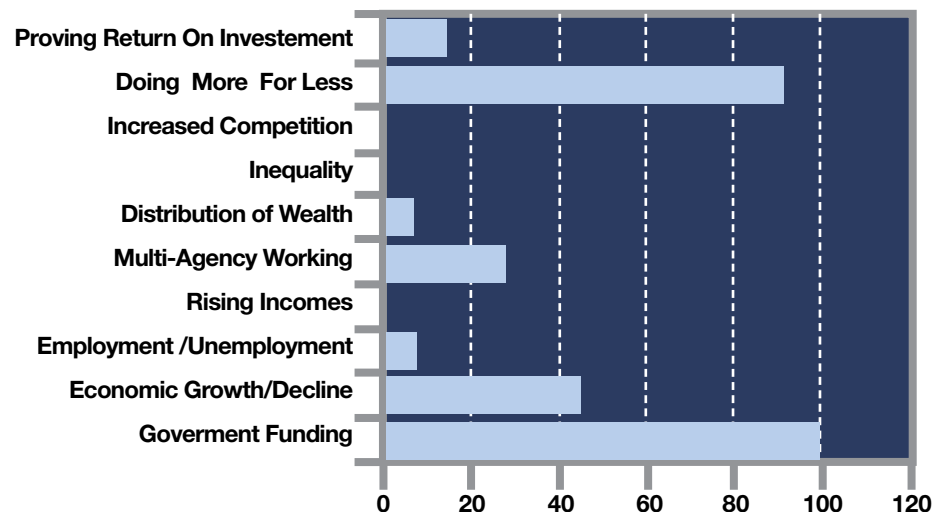
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‘What seems clear at the moment however is that the CSR settlement is leading generally to the “salami slicing” approach being taken. Some authorities are having to look at almost nuclear options to achieve savings, likely to have a disproportionate impact on prevention and protection, whilst those not affected to anything like the same degree are looking at much more modest change. What is arguably lacking is the collective motivation or will to look at making some of the changes that would drive out the existing inefficiency and duplication that exists across the Service, to the collective benefit of all. Principally this is looking at much more meaningful collaboration locally, the possibility of fewer authorities and an over-arching approach to delivering work that would be much better done collectively (but are not necessarily national functions).’

Different commentators have argued that in an era of budget reductions, learning and development is typically one of the first areas where an organisation needs to justify the need for sustained funding.

Figure 3.2: Economic Drivers of FRS Learning and Development



Source: Skills for Justice Employers Skills Survey, 2010

Figure 3.2 shows the views from respondents within the FRS when they were asked which economic drivers are likely to impact on learning and development activities across the sector in the skills survey deployed by Skills for Justice in 2010.

All respondents (100%) to the survey believe reductions in government funding will impact on the way learning and development is undertaken in the FRS. Out of all respondents, 93% also believe the need to do more for less in the coming years will have an impact on learning and development within the sector.

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Other economic drivers which the respondents feel will impact on learning and development include:

- Uncertainty in economic growth or decline (43% of all respondents)
- The need for multi-agency working (29% of all respondents)
- The requirement to prove returns on investment (14% of all respondents)
- The distribution of wealth across the population (7% of all respondents)
- The patterns of employment or unemployment (7% of all respondents).

It is predicted that the reductions in public spending and the rise in the standard rate of Value Added Tax (VAT) to 20% from January 2011 could result in the loss of almost 1.6 million jobs across the UK.¹ The FRS workforce, particularly within the public sector, is not used to down-sizing. Change within Fire and Rescue Services is particularly challenging to achieve due in part to challenging industrial relations and a reluctance to erode operational independence.² As in the wider public sector, the employment impacts of budget reductions to the sector are likely to affect the regions and nations of the UK differently.

Reductions in funding are likely to affect not only the way core functions are performed, but also how prevention work is delivered. In a recent communiqué³ issued by the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), the likelihood that budget reductions may threaten the ability of Fire and Rescue Services to deliver effective response services over the next few years was stressed. An excerpt from the Position Statement reads as follows:

'If funding cuts threaten the ability of an FRS to deliver an effective response service FRSs may have little option but to reduce the extent of our prevention work. The impact of this will be felt in years to come and cost to the society is likely to rise (£1.7m per fire fatality). Many of the initiatives currently being undertaken by FRSs such as road safety education, youth diversion activities and co-responding may be at risk if the Service has to retrench to core statutory duties as a result of disproportionate budget reductions.'

Reducing prevention work could mean that associated development training may also require modification. Some training modules may be withdrawn completely. There is no doubt that the prevention work of the FRS is crucial and would have to continue in spite of the spending reductions, albeit with some modification to current approaches in order to meet with governments requirements of doing more with less.

It is also pertinent to recognise the potential impact of the UK Consumer Prices Index (CPI) annual inflation rate which increased from 3.7% in December 2010 to 4% in January 2011. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) noted that two main factors which contributed to this rise are the increase in the standard rate of VAT to 20% and the continued rise in commodity prices like oil.⁴ This is likely to make recent budget reductions even more severe for the FRS.

¹ Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2010), CIPD Estimates 1.6 Million Extra Private Sector Jobs Needed by 2015-16 Simply to Offset Full Impact of Coalition Government's Spending Cuts and VAT Rise.

² Department for Communities and Local Government (2010) Fire Futures: Efficiency, Effectiveness and Productivity Report.

³ Chief Fire Officers Association (2010), CFOA Position Statement: Spending Review 2010.

⁴ Office for National Statistics (2011), Inflation CPI inflation 4.0%, RPI 5.1%.

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3.3. Social Drivers

Recent estimates from the statistical arm of the European Commission indicate that the population of the UK has grown to over 62 million people.¹ The demographic make-up of the UK is characterised by an increasingly diverse population.

The FRS needs to be fully conscious of the diversity of the population they serve. An awareness of variations on issues like religion, culture, ethnicity, levels of education, gender, age distribution and life styles is critical to ensure that the services provided by the service are appropriate for the local community.

Although not peculiar to the FRS, a number of social and demographic issues continue to impact on the UK Justice, Community Safety and Legal Services sector in different ways.² Some of these issues are highlighted below:

- **The traditional demographics of the sector is one of an ageing workforce, predominantly white and predominantly male. Equality & diversity issues are critical areas to be addressed in both recruitment terms and in terms of workforce skills and knowledge**
- **The sector interfaces with increasing numbers of older victims, witnesses, offenders serving sentences in prison and in the community, as well as with other members of the public, and it will need to continue to be responsive to their needs**
- **The sector must try to engage with younger people and the workforce will require skills to enable this to happen**
- **In Wales there is a growing need for the justice sector workforce to be able to communicate more often using the Welsh language**
- **In Northern Ireland there are still issues around religious and sectarian allegiances which the sector needs to take into account**
- **There is a need to make provisions in Scotland and Wales for people in rural areas.**

¹ Eurostat (2010), Total Population.

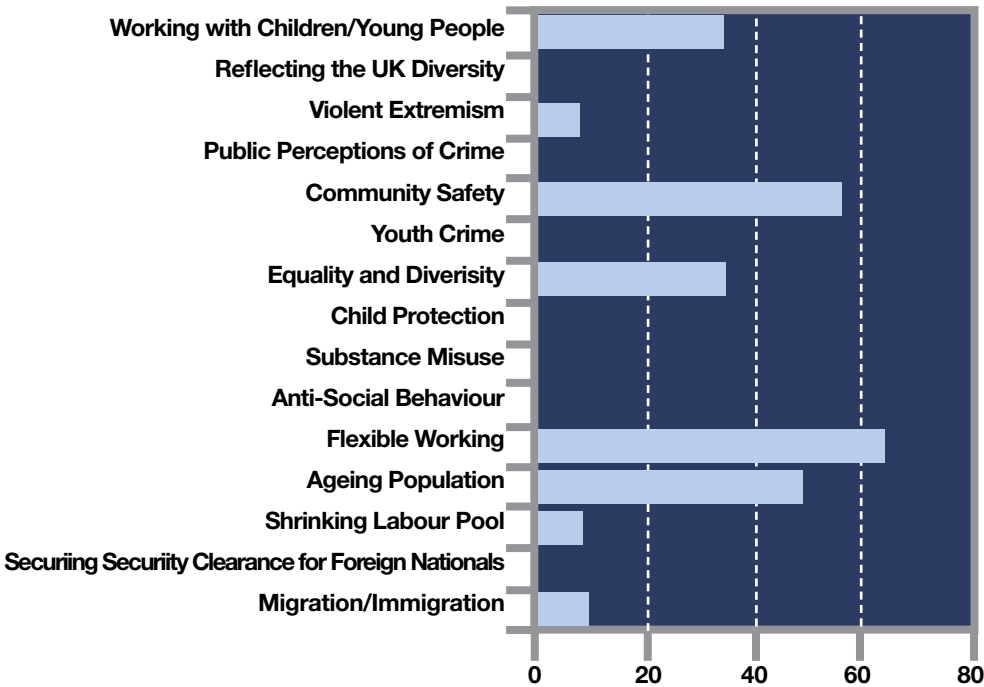
² Skills for Justice (2010), Skills for Justice 2010 Sector Skills Assessment: Employment and Skills in the UK Justice, Community Safety and Legal Services Sector.

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Analysis of the 2010 skills survey conducted by Skills for Justice further highlights some of the issues listed above. Results on the perceptions of respondents to which social drivers are likely to influence learning and development activities across the sector are shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Social Drivers of FRS Learning and Development



Source: Skills for Justice Employers Skills Survey, 2010

The requirement for flexible working presents a stiff challenge for learning activities across the sector with 64% of all respondents indicating this. Another potentially significant social driver is the concern for community safety. A proportion of 57% of all respondents believe community safety will impact on learning and development across the sector in the coming years. The ageing population of the UK is also a source of concern to the respondents, with about 50% of all of them indicating that this issue will also significantly impact on learning activities across the FRS going forward.

Other social drivers of change which the respondents feel will impact on learning and development includes:

- The continuous concern for improving equality and diversity (36% of all respondents)
- Potentially increasing need to work better with children and young people (36% of all respondents)
- The patterns of migration and immigration (7% of all respondents)
- The shrinking pool of labour (7% of all respondents)
- The growing concerns for violent extremism (7% of all respondents).

Across the UK in general, there is an ageing population largely due to longer life expectancy. In a sense, this translates to the likelihood of a substantial proportion of the population being vulnerable. Fire incidents often result in significant economic and emotional costs. According to CFOA, an increase of up to 10% in deaths and injuries resulting from fires and road traffic accidents and a 10% increase in commercial damage could result in a £400 million cost to the UK economy.¹ Public spending reductions could further increase the risk to which vulnerable population groups, particularly older and younger people, are exposed.

It is also important to recognise that activities in the FRS are linked to other allied professions like the Police and legal services. Budget reductions within these organisations may impact on the way in which they work with FRS. This could also impact on the way inter-sector shared learning is done and require the FRS to modify skills acquisition in response.

¹ Chief Fire Officers Association (2010), CFOA Position Statement: Spending Review 2010.

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3.4. Technological Drivers

Rapid global advancements in technology will have impacts on the way the FRS operates. It is therefore imperative for the sector to be tuned in to new technologies. There is a consensus that leveraging on appropriate technology can help improve FRS operations by enhancing access to high quality information, speeding up services and saving energy.

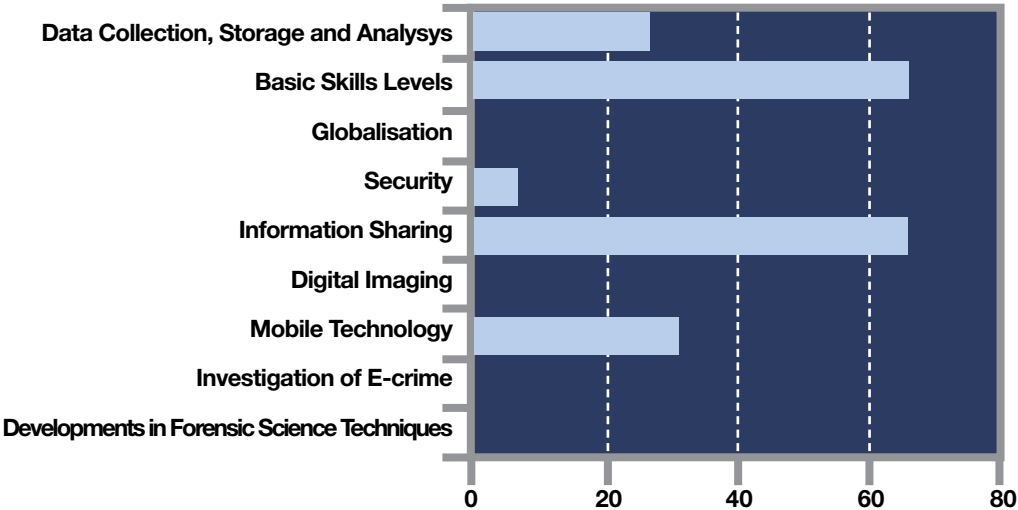
Technology is important to fire operations and services in a number of ways.¹ These are listed below:

- Resource control and deployment
- Emergency response and operations
- Enhanced internal and external communication
- Administration and office automation
- Fire prevention
- Emergency management
- Training
- Research

The use of technology in resource control and deployment entails programme and organisational performance evaluation, fleet management and planning for capital, including personal asset.

When undertaking emergency response operations, technologies like Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) are important location tracking technologies for effective crisis-related operations. The need to provide crucial and timely information during emergency response cannot be overestimated. Mobile data technology helps to enhance this ability. Other important uses to which technologies are put during emergency response activities include emergency medical services, thermal imaging and personnel tracking.

Figure 3.4: Technological Drivers of FRS Learning and Development



Source: Skills for Justice Employers Skills Survey, 2010

The views of respondents to the skills survey on the technological drivers of change likely to impact on learning and development activities across the sector are captured in Figure 3.4.

The main technical issues of concern to the respondents are the need for improved sharing of information and the increasing requirement for enhanced levels of basic technical skills. For each of these two drivers, about 64% of all respondents feel their impact will be significant.

¹ NFPA and Cote, E. (2003), Organizing for Fire and Rescue Services.

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Other technological drivers which the respondents feel will impact on learning and development include:

- The use of mobile technology (29% of all respondents)
- The way data is collected, stored and analysed (29% of all respondents)
- Security issues (7% of all respondents).

There is a need for continuous up-skilling to enable operational staff, control room staff, managers, specialists, other professionals, and other support staff keep up to date with latest technological developments relevant to their work.

Data handling is another issue of importance within the sector. As the transition from centralism to localism progresses, this will become even more important. Data protection and data sharing issues may need to be dealt with locally requiring training of staff and/or volunteers.

Use of the internet has become widespread in the UK with millions of people online regularly. It is practically impossible for any future-focused sector in the UK economic landscape to ignore virtual communities of people. With specific reference to learning

and development, computers and internet technologies provide unique opportunities for enhanced e-learning. Electronic education is relatively easy to set-up and affordable to update and sustain.

Social networks also need to be critically considered. With the internet now integrated into almost all facets of everyday business use, numerous business owners are realising the important role that social networking can play in driving business performance. The UK FRS operates in a knowledge-driven economy and the landscape of social networks is increasingly becoming a hot-bed for monitoring and sharing information, knowledge and intelligence.

Another important strength of modern technology is that it offers an easier and possibly faster environment in which to access, retrieve and analyse information. Technology is increasingly being used as a cognitive tool and in the creation of constructivist learning environments. This is because technology can more readily provide a highly learner-oriented and interactive environment in a less expensive way.



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Case Study 2: Virtual Reality Training Software

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) has been using virtual reality software since 2005 as part of the assessment process for Crew and Watch Managers.

The software was also used as part of the Incident Command Development course for Crew and Watch Managers.
In 2008 a decision was taken to tender for a new system, the new system would need to extend our capabilities to station manager and above and must be portable to allow us to deliver training in locations other than the simulator suite.
NIFRS coordinated 'Exercise Day Return' a multi-agency railway emergency training exercise in Belfast in October 2008.

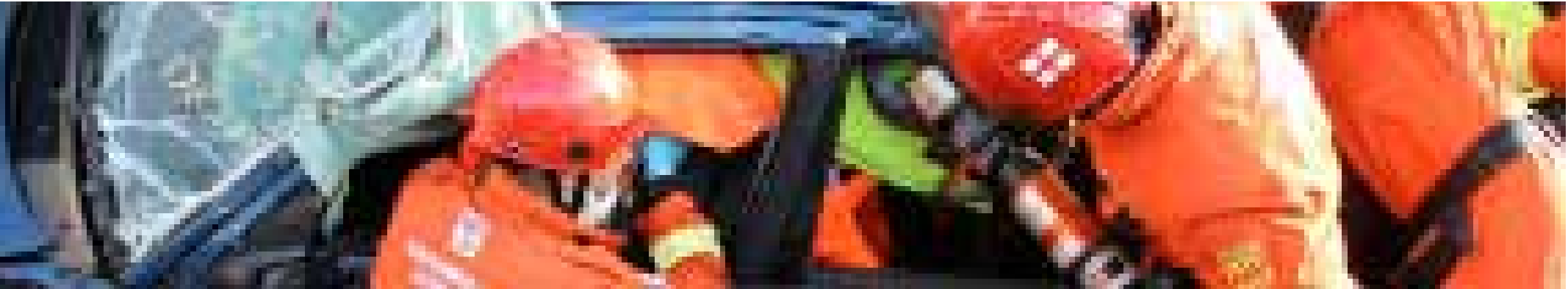
A specification was written detailing our system requirements and published to allow interested parties to tender for a contract.

In 2009 a contract was awarded to e-semble in Delft for supply of their XVR virtual reality system. Following delivery and training in October 2009 we have used the equipment as part of the Crew to Watch Manager In-Band Assessments. It has also been used to deliver Incident Command training to Crew and Watch Managers, Command seminars to Fire Cover Officers and augment Hazardous Materials training courses by providing real time Haz-Mat exercises.

Evaluation of the merits of individual Virtual Reality systems was carried out by a team who visited fire and rescue services using alternative systems in order to find out first hand the benefits and short comings of each system.

The Virtual Reality System we purchased was demonstrated to us at the Service training centre by the providing company. Further evaluation is carried out at the end of each training course by checking student feed back forms, this allows us to suggest or request system changes from e-semble, keeping the system up to date and effective.

Source: The Chief Fire Officers' Association



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3.5. Environmental Drivers

In a recent comprehensive assessment¹ of the UK Justice, Community Safety and Legal Services sector, Skills for Justice deduced that across the different strands,² the greatest impact of environmental change was borne by Fire and Rescue Services.

The diverse nature of services provided by the FRS means that environmental factors need to be considered carefully. A recently published Fire Futures report³ emphasised some of the reasons why going forward, environmental challenges will present stiff challenges within the sector.

- **There will continue to be more (and more severe) heathland and forest fires, some of which will threaten property, particularly in the South. There is little the FRS, on its own, can do to prevent such fires and reacting to them is hugely demanding on resources**
- **Floods will continue to be more frequent and more severe, their consequences exacerbated and in part created by several decades of building on land that is now effectively flood plain. The role of the FRS in such incidents is currently ill-defined and typically leads to a demand to pump water out when there is nowhere sensible to pump it to**
- **Severe weather of all kinds creates demands on the FRS to undertake rescue work.**

To address some of these challenges, adequate technological training needs to be encouraged.

The learning and skills development implications of environmental drivers can be summarised⁴ as follows

- **Increased risks of events, such as large scale flooding, require a continued need for Fire and Rescue Staff to be able to operate rescue equipment and vehicles, assess and minimise risks, organise evacuations etc**
- **Refresher training for activities that require critical risk – e.g. flood and wild-fire rescue**
- **Skills and experience in joint exercises/simulations with other emergency and support services**
- **Leadership & management capacity within command/control/co-ordination functions is also vitally important**
- **As regards sustainability targets, realistically most organisations are likely to seek outside support from energy efficiency specialists rather than build considerable in-house expertise**
- **Skills in understanding and interpreting environmental legislation so that it is applied in practise.**

¹ Skills for Justice (2010), Skills for Justice 2010 Sector Skills Assessment: Employment and Skills in the UK Justice, Community Safety and Legal Services Sector.

² As the Sector Skills Council and Standards Setting Body for the Justice and Community Safety sector the work of Skills for Justice spreads across the following strands: Community Safety; Courts, Tribunals & Prosecutions; Custodial Care; Fire and Rescue; Forensic Science; Legal Services, Offender Management and Support; Policing & Law Enforcement; Victim, Survivor & Witness Support; Youth Justice & Children's Workforce.

³ Department for Communities and Local Government (2010), A Series of Options for the Future of Fire and Rescue Provision in England.

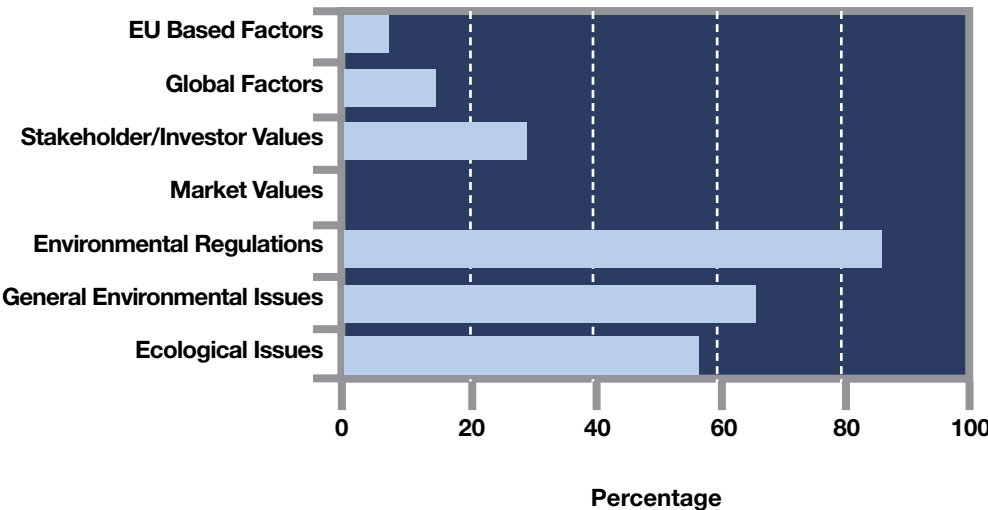
⁴ Skills for Justice (2010), Skills for Justice 2010 Sector Skills Assessment: Employment and Skills in the UK Justice, Community Safety and Legal Services Sector.

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Figure 3.5 shows the views from respondents within the FRS when they were asked which environmental drivers are likely to impact on learning and development activities across the sector in the skills survey deployed by Skills for Justice in 2010.

Figure 3.5: Environmental Drivers of FRS Learning and Development



Source: Skills for Justice Employers Skills Survey, 2010

Legislation within the environmental arena is the main issue of concern to respondents to the survey. About 86% of all respondents feel environmental legislation will impact on learning and development significantly. In addition to legislation, 64% of all respondents also reported that the way general environmental issues are understood and prepared for will be an important driver going forward. Ecological issues should also be considered a matter of significant importance within the environmental domain, as 57% of all respondents believe it is an important driver for learning and development. An important factor for the FRS is that they have to contain their activities so as to minimise environmental impact.

Other environmental drivers which the respondents feel will impact on learning and development include:

- The values of investors and stakeholders (57% of all respondents)
- Global environmental factors (14% of all respondents)
- European Union based factors (7% of all respondents).

3.6. Legal Drivers

In October 2010, about 90 percent of the Equality Act 2010 came into force following the Commencement Order put through by the Government.¹ Some of the provisions of the act are likely to drive activities across the FRS from an operational and skills perspective.² These include:

- **Public sector duty regarding socio-economic inequalities**
- **Applying the European definition of indirect discrimination to all protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, duty to make adjustments for disabled persons**
- **The basic framework of protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation in services and public functions, premises, work, education, associations, and transport**
- **Extending protection from indirect discrimination to disability**
- **Extending the law on discrimination to include discrimination by association**
- **Allowing claims for gender pay discrimination where there is no actual comparator**
- **Making it more difficult for disabled people to be unfairly screened out when applying for jobs, by restricting the circumstances in which employers can ask job applicants questions about disability or health**
- **Enable employers to favour under-represented groups during recruitment**

This L&D report is designed to address a variety of needs including the sector's legal duties and responsibilities. In order to help the sector meet corporate planning issues within the legal domain, the report links closely with the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

It is also important to consider the implications of Lord Young of Graffham's report³ to the Prime Minister following a Whitehall-wide review of the operation of Health and Safety laws and the growth of the compensation culture. The report provides recommendations across the following areas:

- Compensation culture
- Low hazard workplaces
- Raising standards
- Insurance
- Education
- Local authorities
- Health and safety legislation
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)
- Working with larger companies
- Combining food safety and health safety inspections
- Fire services
- Police
- Adventure training

¹ The Equality Act 2010 provides a new cross-cutting legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. More details on the Act and the Commencement Order can be found on the following website: http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010.aspx

² Skills for Justice (2010), Skills for Justice 2010 Sector Skills Assessment: Employment and Skills in the UK Justice, Community Safety and Legal Services Sector.

³ HM Government (2010), Common Sense, Common Safety.

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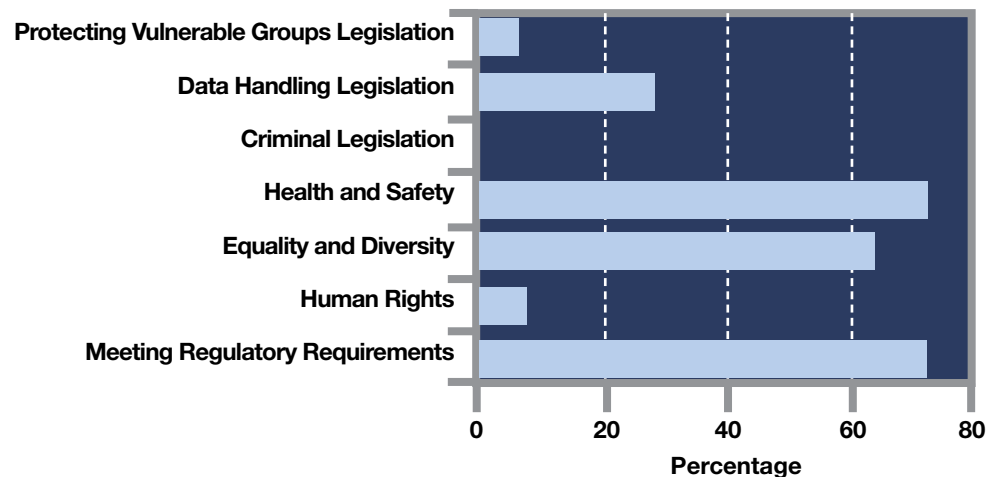


Looking at all the areas above, it is hard to identify any that do not concern the FRS. The report recognises that FRS workforce put themselves at risk in the course of performing their duties and there is particular interest in better protecting the workforce from prosecution and investigation under the health and safety legislation. The recommendations on health and safety legislation will be of particular importance to the work of the FRS going forward and are critical ingredients of a sector-wide competence framework. The recommendations in the report are listed below.

- The HSE to produce clear separate guidance under the Code of Practice focused on small and medium businesses engaged in lower risk activities
- Current raft of health and safety regulations to be consolidated into a single accessible set of regulations
- The UK to lead cooperation with other EU states to ensure that EU health and safety rules for low risk businesses aren't overly prescriptive, are proportionate and don't attempt to achieve the elimination of all risk.

The views of respondents to the skills survey on the legal drivers of change likely to impact on learning and development activities across the sector is captured in Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6: Legal Drivers of FRS Learning and Development



Source: Skills for Justice Employers Skills Survey, 2010

Results shown in Figure 3.6 appear to support the significance of the Health and Safety legislation on learning and development within the FRS. Health and Safety issues and the need to continue to meet laid down regulatory requirements are considered to be the two most important drivers within the legal domain. For each of the two legal drivers, 71% of all respondents to the survey believe they will be important learning and development drivers going forward. In addition to these two drivers, the understanding and implementation of equality and diversity legislations will also continue to influence learning activities across the sector. This is reflected by the 64% of all respondents to the survey who believe this issue will remain important.

Other legal drivers which the respondents feel will impact on learning and development include:

- Data handling legislations (29% of all respondents)
- Human Rights issues (29% of all respondents)
- Legislations relating to the protection of vulnerable population groups (7% of all respondents).

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4. Learning Needs within the Fire and Rescue Sector

Most of the content of Section 3 focused on what is happening or is likely to happen in the FRS macro business environment. In this section, emphasis will be on the micro environment.

An understanding and discussion of learning needs within the FRS is critical in determining current skills and future skills requirements of current employees. It can also be helpful in determining the gap between existing skills, knowledge and abilities of the current workforce and those who may be joining in the future. To enable the FRS to function at a desired level, it is imperative to determine this learning and development gap so that decisions on the types of training required and the mode of delivery can be made.

A recent report¹ based on a study by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) on behalf of Skills for Justice (SfJ) utilised a focus group methodology to identify some of the issues that would have the biggest future impact on skills priorities within the Fire and Rescue Service. The focus group comprised employers, employee representatives and other key stakeholders. They identified some important areas which would be vital for future development. These include the need to better manage organisational change; a requirement to continue to meet equality and diversity targets; and better protection of the FRS workforce including adequate response to their needs. In addition to these issues, other critical areas of learning and development need are further expounded in the following sub-sections.

4.1. Organisational Change

In the last few years, the FRS has taken very important steps to modernise its activities.² There is the recognition that the communities served by the FRS workforce have different needs and expectations. In order to meet these needs and the risks faced within the current economic climate, the FRS needs to remain adaptable and deliver high quality services in a cost effective and efficient manner.

An important precondition for the successful delivery of organisational change would be the up-skilling of managers and other staff in leadership positions across the FRS. A number of areas in which learning could enhance the process of organisational change within the FRS are summarised below.

Planning

It is important to plan in order to leverage time. Doing this can improve the productivity of FRS operational staff, control room staff, managers, specialists, other professionals and other support staff.

Planning also provides the necessary framework for making informed decisions by allowing for the identification of gaps and for the effective management of tasks effectively.

A further advantage of planning within the framework of delivering organisational change lies in its ability to minimise crises management and eliminate the fear of failure.

In the successful delivery of organisational change within the FRS, effective planning is also crucial for identifying and setting priorities. This will allow energy and resources to be deployed robustly to meet the aspirations of the sector.

¹ Skills for Justice (2009), Skills Priorities and Scenarios in the Justice Sector.

² Department for Communities and Local Government (2008a), Fire and Rescue Services Equality and Diversity Report 2009

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Innovation

Innovation is a key ingredient of the Governments modernisation agenda. It is the successful introduction of novel and useful initiatives. A fundamental pre-requisite for innovation is creative thinking and creative ideas.

Innovation within the FRS will involve acting on new and creative ideas to make specific and substantial differences amongst communities served by organisations within the sector.

However, it is important for the FRS employers and employees to be mindful that new ideas need to be put through a process of action to make a visible difference. The implication of this is that innovation typically entails some level of risk.

The management competence accorded to organisational systems or cultures often determines the success or failure of the organisation. For the FRS, the culture of innovation can make a great difference in the level of success or otherwise within the sector. If the innovation culture within the sector is well managed, then there will be the opportunity for a rapid workforce development.



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Case Study 3: Exercise Day Return

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) wanted to find a way to test the multi-agency response to a major incident.

This meant the agencies involved were able to test their Major Incident Plans for the first time. In addition to the immediate rescue and medical tasks, activities included activation of the major incident plans for a number of agencies, opening of a survivor/reception centre, opening of the Casualty Bureau and a significant media dimension. The investigation of the crash was also incorporated into the scenario. All those ‘ingredients’ provided an ideal setting to test inter-agency working and liaison, both on and off site.

NIFRS coordinated ‘Exercise Day Return’ a multi-agency railway emergency training exercise in Belfast in October 2008.

The exercise was designed to test the major incident response (including the media response) of the Northern Ireland Emergency Services, Health Services, Translink (railway company) and other agencies.

The exercise scenario involved 4 railway carriages that derailed following a collision with a vehicle in a simulated crash situation, with 150 passengers on board.

NIFRS Corporate Communications Department led the multi-agency planning group to coordinate the media activity both pre-exercise (public information and reassurance) and during the exercise to provide as challenging and realistic experience in responding to a major incident for press officers and spokespeople.

NIFRS Corporate Communications also participated in the exercise to test their own major incident media response plan and see how they work with the other emergency services and agencies.

The pre-exercise media briefing event included the production of:

- News releases
- Interviews
- Photographs and
- Filming opportunities at the crash site

There also had to be a public information campaign (media and information leaflets) to inform local residents and business owners of the exercise taking place.

The public also had to be reassured that real emergency cover would not be compromised during the training.

The testing required lots of organisation, including

- Pre planning to develop media injects alongside main exercise scenario; drafting scripts; co-ordinating with other injects; organising and briefing media/media students to take part in the exercise;
- Media testing during exercise – both individual and multi-agency crisis communications plans
- Making sure the media took part and attended the crash site and local hospital (media students and real journalists/photographers/camera crews) to test and challenge press officers at scene
- Arranging and managing the multi-agency press conference facility.

The main benefits to come from the scheme include:

- Extensive media coverage (print and broadcast) following pre-exercise media briefing event, including Ministerial attendance.
- All relevant agencies Media/PR Departments participated in the exercise
- Challenging and realistic media presence throughout the exercise
- Good exercise to test multi-agency response and developed multi-agency working relationships.

Source: The Chief Fire Officers’ Association

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Project Management

Over the years, project management has emerged as a fundamental issue that determines the success of many organisations. All organisations utilise projects as the way to translate strategies into actions and objectives into realities. Efficient project handling will play a pivotal role in the overall growth and development of the FRS.

Excellent project management skills are important if the FRS seeks to deliver high quality services to the communities they serve. Project management plans help with the allocation of budgets and other resources such that the pace of productivity is high in qualitative and quantitative terms.

Communicating

Proper communication skills between employers and their employees and among employees are imperative for successful service delivery. Improper communication can result in misunderstandings which can have negative impacts on the overall performance of the sector.

It is imperative for the FRS to learn to inculcate excellent communication skills for a number of reasons. High quality communication is essential in developing the mental and emotional contract, in which the workforce feels appreciated by their employers. In the same vein, adequate communication from employees improves relations with employers.

Communication is also about consistency. When communication flows are consistent, people are more likely to listen. Consistent communication is also critical in generating mutual trust which is an important ingredient for successful delivery of any organisations strategic objectives.

Managers or Team Leaders can hold briefings on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. It is however important that they ensure that everyone is informed about the work plan and their respective responsibilities as individuals and as a team.

Engaging and Consulting

The constitution of the FRS is a reflection of the diverse communities in which it functions. The FRS workforce is expected to be fully engaged with their local communities and understand their values.

A continuous development of skills and abilities within this arena will remain a priority for the sector. Employers and employees within the sector need to be able to understand the risks faced by their local communities and meet their needs.

It has been repeatedly emphasised that safer communities can only be truly achieved by working and liaising with local people. In the future, changes in the demographic constitution of local populations will result in new challenges especially in engaging with people, communicating with them and strengthening social capital and community cohesion. These are important issues which will require continuous polishing of skills in the FRS workforce.

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Negotiating and Influencing

The ever expanding nature of partnership working within the FRS means that there is increasing collaboration between fire services within the public and private sectors. In addition to working with each other, fire services are also increasingly engaged with other agencies with the aim of achieving better efficacy, efficiency and indeed value for money for the good of the public at large.

It is important for all members of staff within the sector to continue to learn how to persuade partner agencies with a view to realizing the best pacts for their local communities.

Learning and development in this direction should strive to ensure that partnership working skills are developed where this can lead to better service delivery than could otherwise be attained.

Emotional Intelligence and Resilience

In today's competitive operating environment, the possibility of occurrence of unwanted or unexpected events has increased significantly. Such events are even more likely within the community safety arena which is the domain of most FRS workforce activities.

It is important for employees and employers alike to continue to hone their knowledge, skills and abilities so that they can identify potential risks, take time to rectify them and help the sector save valuable resources.

In conjunction with dynamic risk management principle, continuous development of the workforce's emotional intelligence will also contribute significantly to better team working skills and the ability of the sector to better visualise any dangers ahead.



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Case Study 4: Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)

Strathclyde Fire and Rescue wanted to be able to enable USAR Technicians to respond to an incident involving Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) and establish coordinated incident management.

The potential for mass casualties, loss of life and other long-term effects is huge. Especially as the time frame in which to administer life saving interventions/treatments is narrow.

Actions taken

Technical input on:

- Structural Collapse
- Safety and Hazard ID
- Six Stages Of Rescue
- Technical Search Procedures
- Basic Shoring
- Concrete Breaking and Breaching
- Case Studies.

Practical Demonstrations and Exercises:

- Rescue from the CBRN environment
- Technical Search acoustic and cameras
- Airshore shoring systems
- Timber shoring systems
- Breaking and breaching
- Tool familiarisation
- Decontamination
- Consolidation Exercise.

Owing to the operational and physical demands of the course, delegates must:

- Be fit for full operational duties in accordance with Fire & Rescue Service requirements
- Attend with full fire kit/ technical rescue garment and associated equipment, which conforms to current standards.

Summary of Key Benefits

- Have developed an understanding of USAR building collapse rescue techniques and associated dangers within the CBRN environment
- Be able to recognise signs and symptoms of building collapse
- Be able to operate safely and effectively within a building collapse using the recognised search and rescue techniques and appropriate CBRN PPE
- To make safe an area that has suffered serious structural damage and allow for the decontamination of the person or persons involved in the entrapment
- To enable personnel to retrieve a sample of a contaminate or source within a unsound structure.

Source: The Chief Fire Officers' Association

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Leadership

The issue of leadership is important if the FRS hopes to meet many of its strategic objectives. There are multiple reasons for this. It is vitally important to recognise that in an organisational context, those in leadership positions will always be required to sell any change initiative so that their colleagues can buy into it in practice in order to make it work.

Effective leadership is also highly dependent on communication and mannerisms. Followers take their behavioural cues from their leaders and watch them to see if their rhetoric matches their action. Any inconsistency between speech and leadership behaviour creates an atmosphere of mistrust. Therefore, both the leader and their initiative may suffer the impact of such inconsistency.

A partnership between the Fire Service College and various sectors of the UK Fire and Rescue Service resulted in the development of the Fire and Rescue Service Aspire Leadership Model.¹ The Aspire model illustrated in Appendix 3 represents an integral element for the implementation of IPDS.

Aspire and the framework is intended to complement IPDS and other aspects of the modernisation agenda. Achieving a national transformation in culture requires a consistent approach to be applied at every level of the service.

The enormity and scale of current and future challenges within the FRS demands firm and clear leadership across the sector. The framework of the Aspire model is useful in ensuring leadership development that is prepared not just for current challenges but also for future demands. This framework dwells on four elements.

¹ The Fire and Rescue Service Centre for Leadership (2006), Aspire – Excellence in Leadership. The New Leadership Model and Framework for the FRS.



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Leadership Domains

The three leadership domains include operational, political and personal-team approach.

Leadership Capacities

This element comprises issues like organising and changing; partnership working; delivering services; community leadership; setting direction, priorities and resources; and personal and team skills.

Personal Qualities & Attributes (PQAs): The PQAs are the essential skills which firefighters need to perform successfully in their roles. These qualities and attributes describe the principal personal qualities that form the basis of the behaviour of members of staff – in and out of work. Table 4.1 shows the list of essential PQAs and how they are evidenced.

Table 4.1: The Fire and Rescue Service Personal Qualities and Attributes

The POA	You need to prove that:
Openness to Change	You are happy to accept changes to procedures or the organisation and that you'll support these changes.
Effective Communication	You can make yourself understood by all sorts of people in all sorts of situations.
Planning & Implementing	You know how to put a plan into action and see it through to the end.
Problem Solving	You can recognise the problems in a situation and work out how to deal with them.
Commitment to Diversity & Integrity	You're honest and respect others – whoever they are.
Working with Others	You can support and encourage others.
Commitment to Excellence	You know how important high standards are, and how to reach them.
Commitment to Development	You think learning is important and look for learning opportunities – for both yourself and your colleagues.
Confidence & Resilience	You can control your emotions and can show others that you're there to get a job done.
Situational Awareness	You recognise hazards and when a situation could become dangerous.
Political Awareness*	You can recognise different agendas and make efforts to create partnerships and networks to further objectives.

Source: Fire and rescue Service Development

* Middle and Strategic Managers only

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In November 2010, the Chair of the IPDS Workstream Group (IPDSWSG) of the Fire and Rescue Service Occupational Committee (FRSOC) presented a paper at the CFOA Learning and Development Managers Forum. The paper summarised the outcomes of the Workstream Group’s initial consideration of the PQA framework. Emerging issues on the PQA framework propose that:

- **A framework of sector-specific expected behaviours / competencies should be maintained and developed and should remain a fundamental component of the overall framework**
- **In line with the overall approach of the framework, it should have the status of best practice guidance and be supported by flexible principles on its use (e.g. concerning rating scales)**
- **Undertaking the future review and updating of the PQA framework on behalf of the sector is a potential role for Skills for Justice**
- **Whilst there does not appear to be widespread demand across services that the current PQA framework requires review, there have been some suggestions for additions/amendments (e.g. the CFOA Safe & Effective Operations Group suggesting need for a ‘Command Awareness PQA’) which may suggest a review would be appropriate**
- **The framework of principles and guidance should cover the use of PQAs in the design of tools for assessment of potential (i.e. the purpose for which they are currently used within the IPDS) but should also cover their wider use in areas such as job design, personal appraisals, performance management and the design of relevant training and development**

The recommendations above are given essential credence in this report as they represent a basis for future development not just of the of the PQA framework but also of the IPDS.

Core Values

Fire and Rescue Service core values lie at the heart of the model. These values include diversity; Fire and Rescue Service people; service to the community; and improvement. Appendices 4 and 5 further illustrate how the Aspire model will enable supervisory managers, middle managers and strategic managers to improve current leadership abilities and develop qualities for future leadership demands.

The development of leadership capacity amongst elected members is also critical. The Centre for Leadership for the Fire and Rescue Service, the Local Government Improvement and Development (LGID) and the Local Government Leadership Centre are already working closely with Fire and Rescue Services across the sector to support and develop leadership capacity. It is crucial to continue to share learning opportunities for senior managers and elected members. Additionally, elected members need to be encouraged to deepen their knowledge and understanding of FRS issues to enable them to be effective in their role.

It is important to mention that the ASPIRE model is not relevant to Scotland. Following collaborative engagement between the Scottish Fire Services College and Chief Fire Officers Association Scotland (CFOAS) a Pathways Model was created to drive the leadership and management agenda for the SFRS. The Pathway Model forms the core of the overall development pathway which is illustrated in Appendix 4.

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4.2. Equality and the Delivery of a Diverse Service

Another important learning and skills development area identified by the focus group of the IES/SfJ study is the need to continue to strive towards improved valuing of diversity. Equality and diversity will continue to serve as important ingredients for creating a workforce that reflects the local communities they serve.

Improving services and performance within the sector in relation to equality and diversity requires new skills in leadership and managing a more diverse workforce, and the introduction of more flexible working practices and skills for engaging with increasingly diverse communities. As reflected in the consultation document¹ published by the LGA, Human Resource (HR) policies will greatly affect the equality and diversity agenda of the sector.

Fire and rescue authorities will be amongst the leaders in addressing these challenges, ensuring that recruitment and Human Resources policies more widely support diversity, and that every opportunity is taken to support effective engagement with local people.

Learning and development in the area of equality and diversity will again be increasingly important as more diverse local populations will necessitate the use of a range of approaches to communication and engagement on fire safety and the other aspects of the widening preventative agenda.

To meet some of these challenges, the Fire and Rescue Service has developed an Equality and Diversity Strategy² spanning ten years from 2008.

The Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework³ highlights the importance that is placed upon working in partnership with the community. The task of bridging equality gaps and enhancing the life chances of the diverse community groups served by the sector is paramount and requires a rich blend of hard and soft skills.

There are case studies of notable outcomes for vulnerable people where the FRS workforce has worked collaboratively with other organisations. Such outcomes have been achieved by sharing expertise and resources. Similar partnerships need to be encouraged across the sector as the over-riding priority of effective service delivery is to attain outcomes that ultimately improve people’s quality of life and reduce social and spatial disparities. This can only be achieved from sustained and demonstrable evidence-based decisions.

Across the country, local authorities are generally responsible for mapping equality issues on subjects like health, education, poverty and well-being and community safety. The FRS however has an obligation to contribute to such local action planning by sharing timely and relevant information on matters such as road traffic collisions, fires and anti-social behaviour.

¹ Local Government Association (2006), Fire and Rescue in 2017: Rising to the Challenge.
² Department for Communities and Local Government (2008b), Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018.
³ IDeA and CFOA (2009), Key Principles: Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework.

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Case Study 5: First Person on Scene

Strathclyde Fire and Rescue personnel will increase their immediate on scene assessment management skills to FPOS Intermediate Standard.

Casualty survival outcome is significantly influenced by the quality of care-administered by the first person on-scene.

Safe use of the Automated External Defibrillator (AED), Basic Life Support, The A to E survey, Motorcycle helmet removal, Airway management, treatment of wounds, rescue board techniques, foreign body airway obstruction, assisting the paramedic, the treatment of medical conditions and the practical application/use of trauma equipment i.e. oxygen equipment, bag valve mask, OP airways, cervical collar application and bandages.

Owing to the operational and physical demands of the course, delegates must:

The pre-exercise media briefing event included the production of:

- Be fit for full operational duties in accordance with brigade requirements
- Attend with full fire kit, which conforms to current standards.

Summary of Benefits and Evaluation Method

- Have developed an understanding of trauma management and the safe use of an AED
- Be able to recognise signs and symptoms of airway occlusion and obstruction
- Be able to operate safely and effectively whilst dealing with casualties at operational incidents
- Have an understanding of the pathophysiology of injury and sudden illness
- Recognise the causes/mechanisms of injury and sudden illness
- Be able to carry out immediate pre-hospital basic treatment and interventions.

Consolidation exercises are conducted in the days prior to the students being assessed on the last day of the course. This will enable the instructional staff to determine whether the student has developed and combined the necessary skills and technical understanding to successfully complete the course.

Candidates are assessed against standards set by Duradiamond Health Care. Only students who have successfully proved competence across all elements of the 4-day course will be certificated.

Technical input from the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) Accreditation from NHS Ambulance training awards body and endorsed by the Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

Source: The Chief Fire Officers’ Association

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4.3. Protecting the Workforce and Responding to their Needs

Often, operational FRS staff are not able to choose their working environment. They can be called upon at any time, to respond to any number of difficult incidents / risk critical emergencies and in doing so, firefighters are exposed to a variety of life threatening situations.

The workforce safety agenda, while not detracting from the risks facing firefighters at operational incidents, needs to encompass all members of staff, not just operational staff on the frontline and needs to encompass protective measures in the broadest sense including education and development, health and safety and so on.

The need for the sector to identify and agree what the core competencies of the workforce should be is crucial. In addition, it is important to hone these skills within the national framework of competencies and standards.

Again from the consultation exercise, some of the development needs of the duty workforce were identified. They include:

- The requirement for a flexible modularised accreditation system
- The need to focus on skills required for effective risk assessment
- The need to focus on skills required for effective limitation of exposure to risk.

In conjunction with this skills requirement, there needs to be development of the ‘retained manager’ role.¹

¹ Skills for Justice (2009), Skills Priorities and Scenarios in the Justice Sector.



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Case Study 6: Incident Command Training Unit

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) and other fire authorities located in the South of England have really improved Command training for fire officers since the opening of a new facility operated by BFRS trainers based at Marlow.

BFRS identified a need to have a system in place to assure competence of commanders at any level. Courses available from outside providers, at the time, were not assessable meaning that there was no form of quality assurance. There was also no provision for BFRS Retained Duty System staff (RDS) to attend Command courses.

Over the last three years a suite of Command courses have been produced to support the development and maintenance of Command skills. Fire service commanders ranging from newly qualified Crew Managers through to strategic Principal Officers are exposed to dynamic incident re-creations in a safe, immersive learning environment.

The training centre at Marlow provides development courses at all 4 levels of incident command to ensure staff have the necessary skills to deal with the command and control of all incidents BFRS may be required to attend, these are accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM). As such the facilities are fully underpinned by Internal and external verification.

State of the art software allows trainers to create unprecedented realism in imagery, combined with complexity and incongruity in decision making, using recognisable aspects of the operational environment.

The competence of all existing operational managers is confirmed on a regular basis through a range of programmes and recertification courses. Simulation and syndicate discussion exercises culminate in both a written paper, assessing technical underpinning knowledge, and practical skills assessment against the relevant National Occupational Standards (NOS).

To further replicate a realistic learning environment the training suite boasts a room fitted to replicate a fully functioning Command Unit.

Further confirmation and development of skills is achieved through monitoring performance in the workplace using line managers as monitoring officers. Their attendance is firmly embedded in both the mobilising and development protocols of the organisation. Observations are then reported through a central database which in turn is able to identify and influence subsequent ICS training, equipment failures and health and safety compliance.

All newly promoted managers are subject to a safety critical assessment before being offered any operational command position. Any identified areas for improvement are addressed and subject to re-assessment prior to acceptance into role. Development is further enhanced through attendance on Incident Command Foundation Course (ICF), Incident Command Station Manager (ICSM), Incident Command Group Manager (ICGM), Incident Command Area Manager (ICAM) and Multi-Agency Gold Incident Command (MAGIC) and GOLD courses at the Fire Service College.

Working in partnership with Thames Valley Police and other Category 1 responders, a number of multi-agency training events have been organised in support of the service’s statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Further tactical and strategic training is facilitated through a partnership arrangement with the Defence Academy - Joint Services Command and Staff College at Swindon at which fire service commanders act as subject matter experts in syndicate discussions with military personnel to give a ‘fire’ perspective regarding Command Doctrine and protocols.

Source: The Chief Fire Officers’ Association

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4.4. Training Needs – Safety Critical Operational Training

The FRS workforce and in particular operational staff operate in risk-prone environments and can be called upon at any time. This makes health and safety issues absolutely critical as they directly relate to workforce safety. The FRS staff must be adequately reassured that their safety is given optimum priority in learning and development matters. The extent to which FRS can generate practical and effective training opportunities to compensate for the comparative shortage of ‘live’ exposure is extremely important. In terms of training for operational engagements, the recently published HSE Consolidated report¹ provided some essential recommendations. We recognise the importance of these recommendations in this report and emphasise their relevance particularly to operational topics.

For breathing apparatus (BA) and compartment fire behaviour (CFB) training, Fire and Rescue Services should:

- Ensure that relevant, effective BA & CFB initial and refresher training is provided to all firefighters
- Provide effective arrangements for the training and assessment of BA entry control officers;
- Have effective processes to assess competence
- Assess the quality and effectiveness of station-based training
- Assure themselves that BA and CFB instructors and those who carry out station based training maintain their competence in the use of BA and in training and assessment
- Maintain accurate records of training
- Ensure the aims and objectives of CFBT are properly identified and delivered
- Monitor the implementation of rapid deployment procedures.

¹ Health and Safety Executive (2010), The Management of Health and Safety in the GB Fire and Rescue Service: Consolidated Report Based on the 8 Inspections Completed by HSE in 2009/10.

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For core skills training, all Fire and Rescue Services should:

- **Ensure the training framework for the maintenance of core skills is able to equip firefighters to competently deal with all reasonably foreseeable risks at incidents**
- **Quality assure the delivery and effectiveness of core skills training across all duty systems and roles**
- **Ensure training records are complete and effective.**

For core skills training, all Fire and Rescue Services should:
For the provision of risk critical information, Fire and Rescue Services should ensure that:

- **They provide adequate training for staff gathering and assessing risk critical information**
- **There is a system in place to actively collect relevant risk critical information**
- **They monitor the effectiveness of these arrangements**
- **Risk critical information is kept up to date and is in a suitable format**
- **Incident commanders are able to access the information to inform their command decisions.**

- **Services should ensure that they deliver effective training (acquisition and development) and assessment for all those who carry out incident command including those on temporary promotion or ‘acting’**
- **National guidance should be provided on good practice in incident command training.**

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Case Study 7: Compartment Fire Behaviour Training

The 2009 National Framework highlighted areas for further training to be incorporated, to enhance the knowledge of Operational Personnel with respect to the behaviour of compartment fire related incidents.

A review was carried out nationally into the procedures and regular training events incorporating Breathing Apparatus. It was found that more had to be done to ensure a high level of training was developed and delivered to all operational and day duty uniformed personnel including senior officers.

In relation to the senior officers and day duty staff a two-day Breathing Apparatus course was designed, this would incorporate Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT).

Owing to the operational and physical demands of the course, delegates must:

- Be fit for full operational duties in accordance with Fire & Rescue Service requirements.
- Attend with full fire kit, which conforms to current standards.
- There is a requirement for senior officers, day duty staff and area instructors to receive training.
- There is a requirement that places the responsibilities on the each individual to maintain and update their skills where necessary.
- The BA and delivery department are required to develop a structured training programme that is in agreement with the operations directorate.
- Students will have gained a more proficient knowledge and understanding of our policy and procedures relating to Breathing apparatus and search and rescue techniques in accordance with the national compliance framework document, Technical Bulletin 1/97 (TB1/97) BA Command & Control Procedures and Operation Technical Note B1 Chapter 1 (Draeger PA 94 BA Set).
- Be able to recognise signs and experience the symptoms inherent with compartment fires.
- Be able to operate safely and effectively whilst dealing with casualties at operational incidents an in a training environment.
- Have a greater understanding of what operational personnel will have to deal with at incidents.

Consolidation exercises are conducted on both days of the course. This will enable the instructional staff to determine whether students have developed and combined the necessary technical understanding that will allow each individual to prove in practical competence in both subjects.

The Service Training centre does not at present issue any certificates for this subject, this is due to the fact it is recognised as a core skill.

All instructors within the Breathing Apparatus department of the Service Training have to attend external training courses, this allows the staff to achieve the necessary accreditation required to teach these specialist subjects.

On successful completion of each subject students are awarded with a nationally recognised certificate for Breathing Apparatus Instructor (BAI) and a B Tech level 3 award for Fire Behaviour Training Instructor (FBTI).

Source: The Chief Fire Officers' Association

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It is critical for the FRS to understand training requirements particularly with regards to operational roles. Recently a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) was conducted for the SFRS.¹ In addition to determining the training requirements for the SFRS, the research also aimed to devise a method that will enable data relating to training needs to be kept robust and up to date to reflect the dynamic environment in which the SFRS workforce functions.

Results from the analysis indicated refresh requirements in the areas of Breathing Apparatus Operator Refresher, Road Traffic Collision Operator Refresher, Fire Behaviour, Tactical Ventilation and Incident Command System Initial at Firefighter level.

Data collected during the conduct of the 2010 skills survey deployed by Skills for Justice, ongoing work by West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service and across other parts of the sector aim to further supplement the findings of the SFRS. To a great extent, these pieces of work support the view that the different Fire and Rescue service providers across the FRS in the United Kingdom have shared working principles as explained in Section 2.1.

It is also pertinent to note that skills and competence may be eroded between refresher training periods. Employees and Line Managers therefore have a responsibility to remain attentive to skills re-training needs and to respond promptly.

This report therefore accepts that FRS employers would take assurance from a nationally recognised refresher programme for risk critical operational functions.

¹ Chief Fire Officers Association Scotland and Scottish Government Resilience Department (2009), Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Training Needs Analysis 2009.



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5. Skills Survey

Since the beginning of the current millennium, skills related issues have remained at the heart of policy making in most industrialised countries including Britain.

In recent years, Britain has vigorously addressed concerns relating to workforce skills deficiencies by setting up various educational initiatives such as the setting up of Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) of which Skills for Justice is one.

While the UK Census of population provides national statistics on various topics, it does not efficiently deal with skills related issues. Typically, skills and workforce surveys provide the means for deriving more up to date and comprehensive quantitative and qualitative snap-shots about the skills of the country’s workforce.

In September 2010, Skills for Justice deployed a sector-wide skills and workforce survey. The survey served as an opportunity, at a critical time, to explore issues around employee skills and workforce development. The survey sought to better position and equip employers including those in the FRS to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world as

they continue to aspire to deliver ever improving services in the face of financial pressures, targets and public expectations.

The research was conducted in-house taking the form of a thematic questionnaire which covers the key issues that have arisen from roadmaps, as well as developing further the findings from the Sector Skills Assessments. This survey allowed us to dig deeper and more broadly into skills priorities and drivers of learning and development across the sector. This also enabled us to provide more incisive intelligence to support employers through these difficult times.

5.1. Target Audience and Potential for Learning and Development

The skills survey will provide an invaluable and informative opportunity to collect, collate and analyse the opinions of key individuals across the FRS. The survey was targeted at people within the sector who have responsibility for issues around training, qualifications, HR and research as well as those with a wider strategic remit. The questionnaire was structured around a number of themes, one of which is learning and development. The analysis of the survey will be combined with the desk research exercise and analysis of key drivers for inclusion in the final L&D report.



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6. Aligning the Report to Business Needs

Strategic alignment is fundamental to a simplified and effective L&D Strategy. In order to ensure adequate synchronisation between learning and the business of the FRS, a network of strategic learning leads across the sector were engaged. These individuals provided regular inputs about the needs within their various jurisdictions and across the wider FRS. The network was able to provide a schema of immediate and future activities of the sector, map upcoming engagements to the precise learning developments required and anticipate when existing learning programmes may become obsolete.

6.1. Principles Underpinning the Report

Learning and development needs to be a pivotal part of the practice and culture of the FRS. It should be all encompassing, flexible to suit different learning styles and work patterns. It should meet the requirements of the individual, the team and the organisation, both now and in the future. It is also important that learning is aligned with improvements in the quality of services. The following principles underpin the FRS L&D report.

Ensuring Equity of Access

In order for different organisations represented across the FRS to meet their objectives and fulfil their obligations to the public and indeed their staff, all members of staff (including operational staff, control room staff, managers, specialists, other professionals and other support staff) should be entitled to appropriate learning and development irrespective of their job roles, level of education, hours of work, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or other socio-cultural background. Exposure to training needs to be fair and should aim to balance the requirements of the member of staff, the team and the organisation at large.

Dynamic Learning Approaches

There is substantial evidence available across the FRS indicating that operational staff, control room staff, managers, specialists, other professionals and other support staff may prefer varying learning approaches. Flexible, blended approaches to learning are required to ensure that learners' different learning styles, preferred modes of learning and work patterns are adequately considered.

Attending to Fresh Learning Requirements

Section 3 of this report has already discussed some of the key drivers of change and emphasised the implications of the new Government and changing policies. Changes across the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal terrain in the UK have significant implications for learning across the FRS. It is therefore imperative that emerging learning requirements are identified and met as quickly as possible.

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Learning Time

The FRS recognises that adequate learning and development is also time-consuming. As time is a constant factor in the day to day business modus operandi of the FRS, it is important to ensure it is efficiently allocated to all activities. It is essential to guarantee a fair and regular approach to free time learning. In order to ensure that individual employees are able to fully develop their skills and aptitudes, protected learning time needs to be encouraged and sustained.

Knowledge Sharing

It has already been established in the second chapter of this report that organisations are represented across the FRS span the public and private sectors. These organisations are also characterised by common operating principles as explained in Section 2.1.

The size and diverse services provided by the FRS is supported by a wealth of knowledge and expertise. It is common practice therefore for more experienced colleagues to provide teaching support towards the skills development of other members of staff and indeed students. This approach to learning is recognised as a core development skill and should be encouraged across the sector.

Joint Learning Approaches

For learning and staff development to be truly effective, it is critical for staff at all levels to work together. This report recognises that all members of staff need to take responsibility for their own learning and exploit the opportunities available to them as much as possible. Managers and other senior members of staff also need to consistently identify the learning needs of their staff and encourage them by providing opportunities to meet individual needs.



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Case Study 8: National Water Rescue Training

After the 2007 summer floods, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service recognised the benefits of organising a national water rescue training event.

The driver for hosting the event was to provide an opportunity for rescue teams that would only normally come together at a major incident to train together in a challenging environment.

MFRS organised a four-day national water rescue training event for firefighters from:

- Northern Ireland
- London
- Lancashire
- Tyne and Wear and
- Cheshire

The event was established following the 2007 summer floods as a vehicle to promote best practice in water rescue. This event was also developed to provide an opportunity for teams that would normally only work together at a major emergency to meet and exchange opinions on training, equipment and response.

2009 was the third time the event had been run. The event has evolved from a predominantly North West Region event in 2007 into one in which a wide range of UK FRS' participate. The participants received invitations after expressing an interest in a number of ways some via contacts established at CFOA IWSG/IWTG and others via word of mouth recommendation from previous participants.

The training was carried out in Llangollen and on Anglesey Menai Bridge, North Wales. The primary objective was to give fire crews from different services the opportunity to learn from each other and share best practice thus enabling them to work together more effectively during flooding emergencies.

The teams practised water rescue skills on a range of watercraft and powerboats and undertook training using Search and Rescue helicopters from RAF Valley. This saw firefighters transferring

casualties from the water into the helicopter (the first time these rescue techniques have been attempted by the FRS).

Training was delivered by the MFRS staff from the Search and Rescue Team (SRT) and the Marine Rescue Unit.

As well as the FRS' named previously, representatives from the Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) of West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust also took part in the training to gain a better understanding of how to assist FRS' during major incidents.

Participants commented that the event provided opportunities to:

- Exchange ideas on training, equipment, and deployments
- Share best practice based on experience
- Learn from other FRS' and employees that have attended large scale flooding events and have been involved in the development of FRS Water Rescue training and procedures
- Allow for better understanding and teamwork during major incidents.

Source: The Chief Fire Officers' Association

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6.2. Future Business and Development Needs in the FRS

It is traditional for learning and development budgets to serve as easy options for making savings during times of economic down-turn. However, if examined from a more holistic perspective, learning is considered an important aspect of business improvement. To this end, learning and development for the FRS within the current economic climate must be viewed in a very different way.

The economy of the UK will not remain in its current state forever and it may be argued that things can only improve. The economy will recuperate and learning and development can be used to prepare the FRS strategically for an economic recovery.

A more considered course of action is to ensure a stable supply of learning opportunities during difficult times in order to sustain the motivation of the workforce and to be strategically positioned for better days ahead.

In the future, business related learning needs will particularly be identified via adverse incident reporting, complaints and hazard management. The CFOA has already identified three operational areas relating to the analysis and management of risk needing directorate action. These include:

Understanding of Risk

- Risk information gathering pre-incident
- Promulgation of risk information pre-incident
- Alignment of generic risk information

Managing Risk

- Command competence
- Development of command support systems
- Multi-agency command training
- Provision of dynamic risk information

Improving Performance

- Operational assurance
- Training provision and its management
- Instructional competence
- Provision of dynamic risk information

Systems will need to be put in place to help managers and departmental leads identify learning needs promptly and communicate such needs to appropriate learning and development departments.

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6.3. Successful Learning

Determining if learning is successful is a subjective process. However it is important to be able to measure and ensure the effectiveness of learning delivered across the sector. One of the important ways to guarantee successful education is to ensure that it supports lifelong learning.

In order to support lifelong learning, it is important to increase capacity by strengthening the competence for teaching and learning amongst operational staff, control room staff, managers, specialists, other professionals and other support staff. All members of staff should be encouraged and made to realise that they have a responsibility to share their skills and aptitudes across the sector. This will ultimately allow others develop.

The promotion of coaching skills for managers and other staff in leadership positions will also contribute to the development of other members of staff. When staff move into new roles, mentoring and coaching skills can particularly prove useful for their personal development.

To support managers, guidance and advice need to be provided to enable them play key roles in the continuous promotion of workplace learning.

6.4. Innovative Learning and Development Methods

For learning to be truly successful within the sector, it is important to consider delivery via a variety of development methods. Conventional and scholarly education will continue and should be encouraged within the FRS. It is important however to complement these with work-based learning approaches. Work-based learning will continue to play an important role in the process of maintaining skills, re-skilling and up-skilling the workforce.

The choice of method will depend on a number of factors which could include:

- Personal learning styles and preferences
- Available resources
- Capacity
- Needs of the organisation
- Existing availability of knowledge and experience

In order to meet the requirement for flexible education, learning provision needs to consider a variety of methods which could include work-based learning, open learning materials and e-learning.

Learning activities should be aligned with the core business opportunities and should be provided in a flexible way. There is perhaps no one size-fits-all approach. Some employees may benefit from coaching or mentoring while others prefer group-based learning. The fundamental aim should be to match the individual to the most appropriate form of learning such that their needs are met.

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6.5. Improved Access to Learning

Improved accessibility to learning resources is a paramount requisite for optimum education and up-skilling of the FRS workforce. The FRS has a substantial learning resource base such as toolkits, compact discs, digital videos and books. An agenda for expanding this existing resource base could be pursued and strengthened.

Multiple examples of good practice exist across the FRS. These should be shared and promoted continuously. Good practice examples should also be regularly updated.¹

Information technology (IT) skills are critical to many current and future job roles within the FRS and E-learning provides a dynamic means of maintaining skills, knowledge and competence. It is important for the sector to continue to assess, update and evaluate the IT skills of its workforce. New starters for instance can be assessed either as part of the recruitment process or during the induction phase. This will enable adequate training to be offered if required.

Legislation requires organisations in the UK to be anticipatory in their responsibilities towards disabled staff and to provide reasonable adjustments to ensure a disabled individual is not placed at considerable disadvantage relative to their peers.²

To further improve access to disabled members of staff, good practice in learning and development requires an awareness of the physical environment, an ability to accommodate mobility chair users, provision of information in auditory and visual forms and the ability to accommodate guide dogs.

6.6. Responsibilities of Staff

In order to be effective and deliver more to the community it serves, the FRS is increasingly providing a diverse service. Patterns of work and delivery are becoming increasingly sophisticated. The impact of this across the sector is the demand for higher level skills to meet new and emerging challenges.

Irrespective of their job roles, all operational staff, control room staff, managers, specialists, other professionals and other support staff require a set of core skills and competencies to enable them carry out their duties. Basic skills in literacy, numeracy and Information Communications and Technology (ICT) are essential and members of staff need to pledge their commitment to gaining, improving and applying these aptitudes.

As emphasised in the Fire Futures report³ on efficiency, effectiveness and productivity, operational staff in particular need to remain competent in specialist skills. An excerpt from the report reads as follows:

“The maintenance of occupational standards and the development of a qualification framework, specifically focusing on risk critical activities is vitally important”

Employees within the FRS need to be conscious of the fluid environment in which they operate. With support and encouragement from employers, all members of staff need to be more flexible, imbibe a broader range of skills and be better able and willing to manage their own career development.

¹ Department for Communities and Local Government (2010) Fire Futures: Efficiency, Effectiveness and Productivity Report.
² Department for Communities and Local Government (2008a), Fire and Rescue Services Equality and Diversity Report 2009.
³ Department for Communities and Local Government (2010), Fire Futures: Efficiency, Effectiveness and Productivity Report.

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6.7. Evaluation

It is imperative to ensure that the education and training provided for the FRS workforce meets their needs and remains responsive to changes in policy and practice. In order to achieve this, it is important to continuously appraise the L&D Strategy to ensure that it is delivering and is still fit for purpose.

Evaluation is an essential part of an accountable, professional and ethical service. It is a primary indicator of good governance, good practice and good management. It is a useful mechanism for facilitating and promoting effective learning and development. For the FRS, this will help ensure that the approach of the sector to people development aligns strategically with its goals and helps deliver value for money.

Some reasons why an appraisal of the L&D Strategy may be needed include:

- **The need to continuously assess if intended learning and development objectives are being met**
- **The requirement for continuous improvement of learning and development**
- **An assessment of whether learning and development resources are being used wisely**
- **The need to justify investments and assess the value for money of the learning and development**
- **A need to continuously ensure quality and accountability**
- **A need to meet external demands and requirements**
- **A requirement for assessing risk**
- **An opportunity to facilitate decisions on whether to continue or discontinue a series of activities**
- **The need to ensure appropriateness and ensure alignment with strategic objectives.**

In 2003, the Australian Public Service Commission and the Australian National Audit Office developed a model for evaluating learning and development.¹ The model shown in Figure 6.1 splits the learning and development lifecycle into three phases recognising six elements of evaluation across the three phases.

¹ Australian Public Service Commission and the Australian National Audit Office (2003), Building Capability-A Framework for Managing Learning and Development in the APS.

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Figure 6.1: Learning and Development Evaluation Model

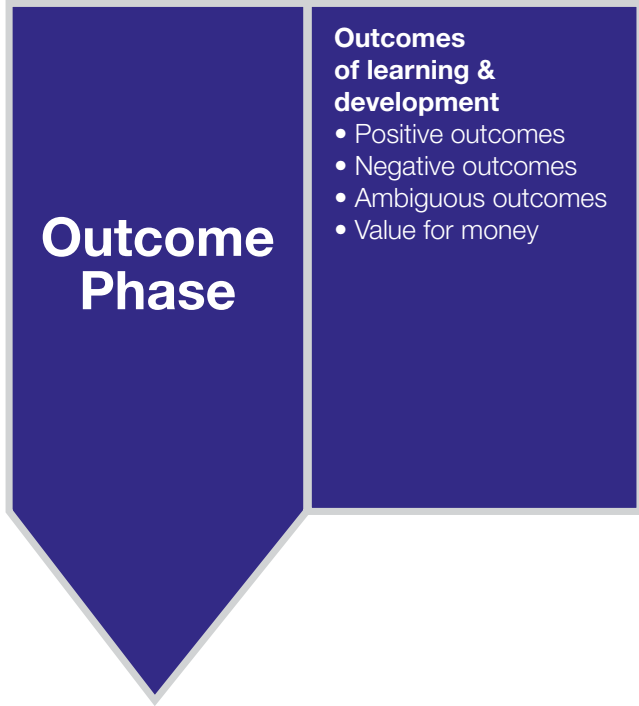
Pre-intervention



During intervention



Post intervention



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Three critical questions can be answered with the model.

The first phase of the model seeks to answer the question: The second phase of the model seeks to answer the question: The third phase of the model seeks to answer the question:

Do we know what our needs are?

Are we meeting our needs in the best possible way?

Did we achieve the desired outcome and can we improve?



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7. Sustaining Learning and Development

An awareness of the probable barriers to learning is crucial for learning managers. Some of the potential difficulties that may be encountered are captured below:

- Absence of political will
- Leadership and management styles
- Sector-wide interoperability requirements
- Cross-border resilience
- Values, attitudes and behaviours
- Workforce profile
- Reluctance to erode operational independence
- Digital versus analogue operations
- Competing demands between Retained Duty System (RDS) and wholetime working
- Challenging industrial relations
- Funding
- Ownership and leadership responsibility

There is sometimes so much energy devoted to the development of a learning strategy and too little attention paid to implementation and sustenance. The success of any strategy is attributable not just to how sound it is, but also to how well it is executed.

An absence of sustained leadership can result in the loss of momentum and implementation activities can gradually lose priority at all levels of the organisation. The attention or lack of attentiveness of L&D managers or leaders to implementation and sustainability is an important pointer to the rest of the organisation.

Getting the execution right by articulating and building the right support for the strategic vision; and encouraging continuous investment in necessary operational and possibly infrastructural changes will be key impetus for driving sustenance.

Given the competing priorities of the FRS, L&D leaders will play an important role in aligning stakeholder priorities with learning provision and adequately managing the dynamics of change. Ensuring that the progress and positive impact of the learning framework are visible can also help maintain encouraging momentum.

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8. Conclusions and Recommendations

The roles of the FRS workforce are increasingly becoming broad and diverse. Apart from responding to emergencies like fires and road traffic accidents, the FRS has an important role to play in prevention, protection and response to communities during major threats of flooding, terrorist attacks and chemical, biological or radiological incidents. Organisations within the sector are also required to work collaboratively with other emergency services like Category 1 and 2 responders, respective Local Authorities and associated Departments and Agencies on issues like intelligence sharing and local development planning. These issues place new demands on learning, training and workforce development across the sector. Flexibility in learning and an encouragement of the concept of knowledge-connectedness are paramount if the sector is to achieve its aspirations.

From a range of primary and secondary data sources, this report has identified and discussed current and potential trends in the demand and delivery of learning practices within the sector. Not only has this report addressed issues surrounding the delivery of learning, insight has also been provided on existing and future learning needs within the sector.

A primary objective of the FRS is the reduction of risks within local communities. The IRMP remains a critical framework for ensuring public safety, and minimising the number of emergency incidents and the severity of their impact. Resources need to be balanced between preventing disasters and responding to emergencies. In the face of the prevailing economic climate, it will be more difficult to attain this balance; however it remains vitally important to continue to reduce risks posed to local communities.

It is clear that the pursuit of a reduction in the national deficit will have impacts on the way resources are used over the coming years. The FRS is keen to make the best use of resources to deliver even more value for money. This will be achieved by improved partnership working and researching and consulting on options for working more efficiently while not jeopardising the work of frontline services.



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8.1. Further Work

The research documented in this Learning and Development report has opened up many avenues for further work in the future. Following the consideration of consultation responses, and discussions with key stakeholders, it was agreed that what is required is a framework that covers all aspects of competence throughout the sector, and in particular an overarching priority for guidance to be produced in relation to Operational Competence. This work will be taken forward jointly by lead Officers from the CFOA People Organisational Development (POD) and Operations Directorates working closely with Skills for Justice.

The task and finish group developed a work programme in the form of a competence framework that they believe forms the basis for structuring and prioritising further work with Skills for Justice, and in particular with stakeholders from the sector. The overarching objectives of the competence framework are outlined below.

Operational Competence

Strategic Focus - Preventing loss of life and injuries from emergency incidents while reducing risks within local communities.

Outstanding Leadership

Strategic Focus - Building visionary, ambitious and effective leadership to make the best use of political and managerial roles, in a partnership context.

Professional Workforce

Strategic Focus - Developing employees' skills and knowledge, in an innovative, high performance, multi-agency context.

Organisational Excellence

Strategic Focus - Addressing the workforce dimensions of organisational transformation to deliver citizen-focused and value for money services.

Sustainable Workforce

Strategic Focus - Taking action to: recruit and retain the right workforce; address key future and occupational skill shortages; promote jobs and careers; identify, develop and motivate talent and address diversity issues

There is unanimity in terms of the immediate priority being to develop guidance on operational competence. It is believed that this guidance should raise the awareness of national standards and qualifications available in risk critical areas and identify and address further gaps in developing common standards. The guidance would also address good practice in relation to the frequency of competence assessment, including overarching aspects of organisational assurance in respect of operational competence. Other wider areas of future work are detailed in Appendix 7.

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8.2. Recommendations

The intention of this final section is not to be prescriptive. We hope to draw on an array of analysed materials and focus group discussions to provide insight and intelligence. Such intelligence may contribute to and sustain a sector-wide competence framework that

reflects the needs of employers and captures the learning and development requirements of their workforce. Areas for consideration are provided below.

- **The IPDS Framework could be developed in a way that could be more easily applied sector-wide, for example to include non public FRS organisations in addition to recognising the specific provisions and application of the principles incorporated into NJC terms and conditions of service for uniformed roles in public services.**
- **It is important not just to focus on learners within the sector but to also consider educational institutions/organisations and other learning providers. Adequate support for learning providers particularly on how best to operate at the interface between education and the world of work needs to be considered and assured.**
- **In order to not to throttle innovation within the sector in the future, consideration needs to be given to how codes of practice and quality assurance procedures can better reflect flexible learning approaches.**
- **In addition to acknowledging and providing alternative work-based learning approaches, organisational policy decisions on work-based learning can be better informed by synergising issues from a tripod perspective taking full consideration of employers, learners and learning providers.**

- **To assure successful learning across the sector, it is important to support lifelong learning. Specific personnel can be identified to take the lead in specific areas of training and development.**
- **The variation with which skills and competences erode in between refresher training periods varies across the sector. The significance is even greater for risk critical operational functions, and there is a sense of urgency that FRS employers need to take assurance from a nationally recognised refresher programme for risk critical operational functions. We recommend that the sector commissions a national piece of work underpinned by robust research on the practice and sustainable future direction of risk critical activities and refresher time-scales.**
- **In order to meet some of the future strategic requirements across the sector, it is important to develop teaching and training capacity. Train-the-trainer models for topical areas and skills could enhance the strengthening of capacity and help staff develop expertise and teaching skills.**
- **NOS should remain as a foundation of the IPDS Framework and be used to extensively support the development of Vocational Qualifications (VQs).**
- **Models and structures also need to be created clearly linking education, training and development, individual performance, career progression and relationships with staff rewards.**

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- Preparing the workforce for an economic upturn should remain a principal focus of the FRS. It is therefore important for adequate funding for learning and development to be factored into business cases or tenders.
- External funding sources could also be considered and sought wherever available to supplement in-house financial support for learning and development.
- The L&D report should be integrated with other people management strategies to enable full achievement of HR development expected outcomes.
- It is vitally important to ensure development programmes deliver the values and attributes that cut across all roles.
- The IPDS Framework should be developed in a way which could present for the first time a clear, single set of broad principles for the sector whilst allowing for appropriate variations in practice, including between individual FR services in England and between those in England and the devolved administrations.
- The sector must try to engage with younger people and some level of priority should be given to the development of skills that will enable this to happen.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Members of the FRS Learning and Development Strategy Task and Finish Group

Darran Gunter	Dorset Fire and Rescue Service
Max Hood	West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service
Richard Hannigan	Humberside Fire and Rescue Service
Julian Sears	Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service
Steve Hamm	London Fire Brigade
Robert Virtue	Scottish Fire Service College
Tim Gardiner	West Midlands, Fire Service Academy
Adrian Jackson	Skills for Justice
Nick Skeet	Skills for Justice
Jon Parry	Skills for Justice
Julie Benson	Skills for Justice
Dr Adegbola Ojo	Skills for Justice
Kevin Deveson	Joint Oil Industry Fire Forum
Steven Torrie	Scottish Fire Service College
Joy Flanagan	Chief Fire Officers Association
Paul Hancock	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service

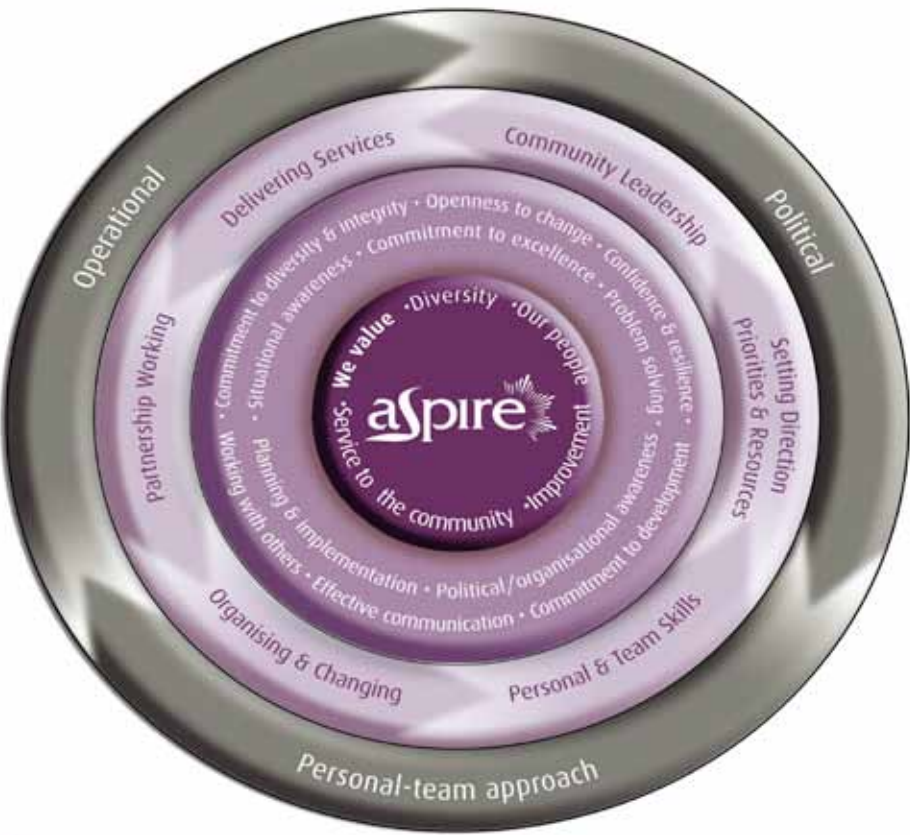
Appendix 2: Members of the FRS Occupational Committee, including Unions and Observers

Max Hood	West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service
Julian Sears	Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service
Richard Hannigan	Humberside Fire and Rescue Service
Joy Flanagan	Chief Fire Officers Association
Steve Hamm	London Fire Brigade
Robert Virtue	Scottish Fire Service College
Alex Clark	Lothian Borders FRS/COSLA/CFOA Scotland
Linda Hurford	Department of Communities and Local Government
Carlton Kerr	DCLG - Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser
Dale Ashford	Northern Ireland FRS
Kerry Citric	Welsh Assembly
Roger Thomas	Chief Fire Officers Association Wales
Alan Robertson	Scottish Fire Service College
Graham Knight	Defence Fire and Risk Management Organisation (DFRMO)
Sean Starbuck	Fire Brigade Union (FBU)
Adam Moore	Retained Firefighters Association (RFA)
Ade Robinson	Retained Firefighters Union (RFU)
Sue Tyley	Fire Protection Association
Kim Robinson	Fire Service College
Simon Webb	Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)
Gerry Johnson	JOIFF
Adrian Jackson	Skills for Justice
Julie Benson	Skills for Justice
Zoe Scott	Skills for Justice

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Appendix 3: Fire and Rescue Service Aspire Leadership Model

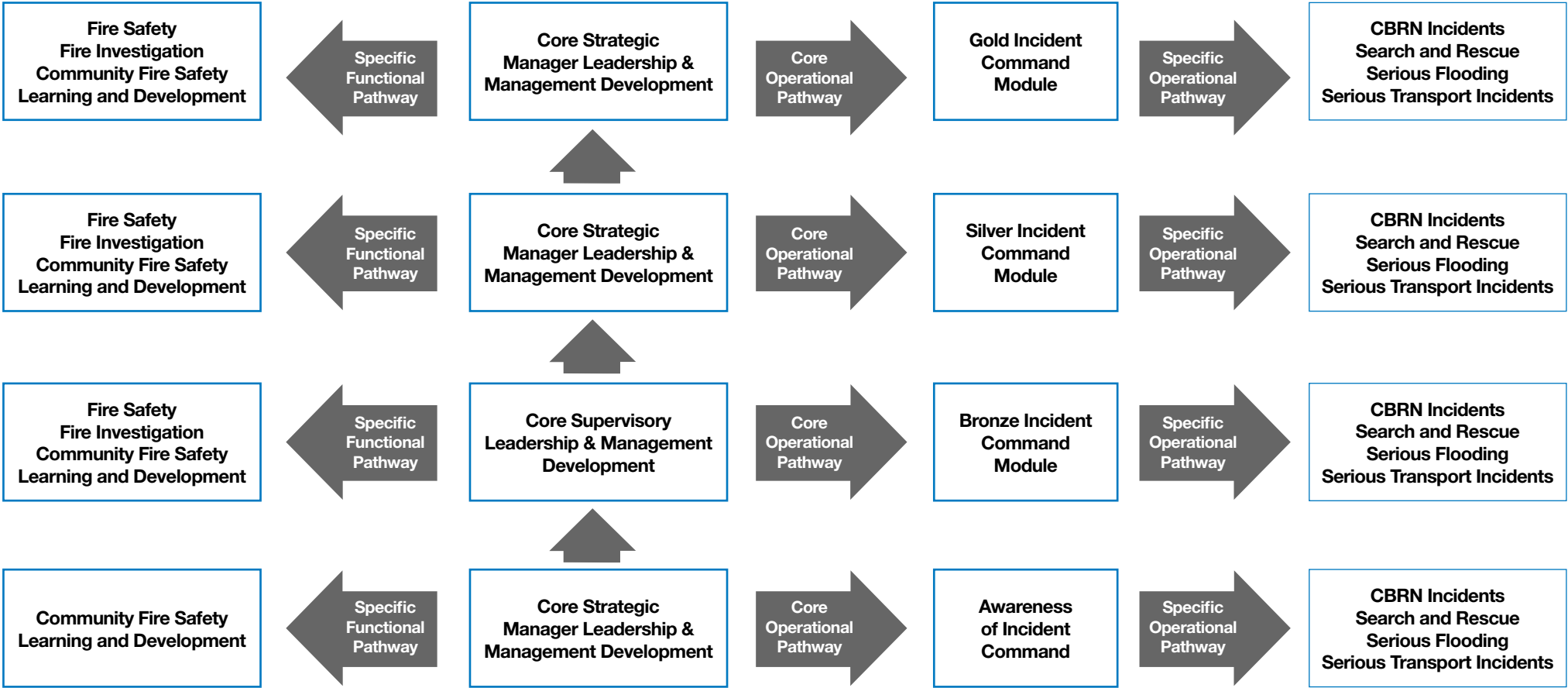


Source: Aspire – Excellence in Leadership. The New Leadership Model and Framework for the FRS

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Appendix 4: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Development Pathways



Source: CFA(S) Scottish FRS Training Needs Analysis

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Appendix 5: What Aspire Means: Opportunities for Enabling and Improving Current Leadership

Supervisory Managers: Watch and Crew and Equivalent Staff Grades	Middle Managers: Station and Group and Equivalent Staff Grades	Strategic: Area and Brigade and Equivalent Staff Grades
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction for new managers • Training needs identified • Attending Crew and Watch Manager training programmes • Being appraised at least annually • Having regular feedback on their performance from their manager • Core Leadership Skills – team leader and manager ILM/CMI • NVQ level 2/3 • Having a mentor or buddy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction • Training needs identified • Attending Station and Group Manager training programmes • Being appraised at least annually • Having regular feedback on their performance from their manager • Core leadership skills – diploma in management ILM/CMI/NVQ level 4/5 • Appraising and supervising staff within locally agreed timeframes • Ensuring all staff have a PDR • Operational command and control training to equip managers to discharge tactical responsibilities at major incidents and to operate effectively as part of Silver level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction • Identify own learning needs, reflect, review & construct a personal development plan utilising the Development Opportunities menu • Having regular feedback on their performance from their manager • Be qualified as a manager – new Area • Managers might possibly attend advanced leadership programmes • Be trained as a coach and mentor • Attend relevant/applicable top and senior management development initiatives • Achieve Chartered Manager and/or Chartered Director status as appropriate • Operational command & control training to equip them to discharge strategic responsibilities at major incidents and to operate effectively as part of Gold level multi agency command groups

Source: Aspire – Excellence in Leadership. The New Leadership Model and Framework for the FRS

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Appendix 6: What Aspire Means: Opportunities for Developing Future Leaders

Supervisory Managers: Watch and Crew and Equivalent Staff Grades	Middle Managers: Station and Group and Equivalent Staff Grades	Strategic: Area and Brigade and Equivalent Staff Grades
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having regular performance reviews • Using diagnostic tools to measure own leadership effectiveness • Using on-line tools • High potential management scheme • Being coached and mentored by Station/Group Managers • Managing local projects • Being trained as assessors • Looking for opportunities to shadow experienced managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting as coach or mentor to Crew/Watch Managers • Using Aspire tools to receive 360 degree feedback and measure their own leadership effectiveness, and planning development • Using on-line tools • High potential and intensive development schemes • Being coached and mentored by Area and Brigade Managers • Managing more complex and larger projects • Having a development strategy for their own staff • Studying for Chartered Manager/MBA Masters Operational command and control training to equip managers to discharge strategic responsibilities at major incidents and to operate effectively as part of Gold level multi-agency command groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Aspire tools to receive 360 degree feedback and measure their own leadership effectiveness, planning development accordingly • Attend Executive Leadership Programme • Using on-line tools provide coaching to other managers and leaders • Lead on large-scale projects • Be involved in centrally led policy and committee work • Demonstrate a commitment to the development of all leaders and managers • Attend strategic leadership programmes e.g. Top Managers Programme Operational command and control training to equip key managers to undertake strategic advisory responsibilities during catastrophic incidents within the UK Resilience framework

Source: Aspire – Excellence in Leadership. The New Leadership Model and Framework for the FRS

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Appendix 7: Fire and Rescue Sector Specific Membership Plus Work-programme

Activity	Rationale	Outcomes	Start-End Dates	Lead Officer
Governance To provide support to ensure the efficient running of the FRSOC. To integrate and align the meetings of the main committee and sub work-stream, T&FG and expert project groups. Membership Plus – connect and link the work of SfJ Board, Council and Country Groups.	Articulate and determine the needs of the services / direction and sector key drivers / challenges. Work in partnership to promote a common vision to reduce skills gaps and improve the quality and supply of learning and training. FRSOC represents the views of CFOA, and key stakeholder to contribute to Membership Plus specific work-programme.	Four quarterly FRSOC meetings organised and supported. Support and advice FRSOC member organisations and their representatives. Attend and participate at FRSOC and sub-work group meetings. To help reduce skills gaps and shortages to improve productivity and performance.	April 2011 to March 2012.	Max Hood, Chair & CFOA lead of the FRSOC.
Research led FRS Learning and Development report.	To develop and support the implementation of the FRS sector-led L&D report. Employers need to take assurance from a sector recognised refresher programme for risk critical operational functions. Support and refresh LMI online resource for Fire and Rescue.	Finalised report and strategy published. Produce printed copies for distribution to FRS member organisations and key stakeholders (Scotland a SFSC) who have contributed to the development. A scoping document/proposal detailing potential areas of work leading unto a sector agreed programme for refreshing risk critical functions. FRSs are able to access to the online LMI matrix.	April 2011 to March 2012.	Max Hood, Chair & CFOA lead of the FRSOC. Darran Gunter, FRS L&DS Project Sponsor.

Appendix 7: Fire and Rescue Sector Specific Membership Plus Work-programme

Activity	Rationale	Outcomes	Start-End Dates	Lead Officer
IPDS (developing a professional framework)	Continue to host, support and refresh IPDS to embed its use and principles of IPDS across the sector.	SfJ continue to host and support IPDS information and secure area for toolkits Inclusion of an online technical forum Chair's report on PQAs Chair's report on the IPDS brand online survey.	April 2011 to March 2012.	Julian Sears, CFOA Chair.
Maintenance and development of competency based standards and qualifications.	Develop and maintain with employer members an effective NOS and VQs programme (links to the SQS action plan & risk critical areas) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA Instructor VQ(s) • Hazmat (VQ(s) • FF9 (NOS review) • Development coherent quals framework for England and Wales 	Finalised standards and VQs submitted to the regulatory bodies and Awarding Organisations. SfJ will work with Awarding Organisations to support the development of qualifications and communication and support.	April 2011 to March 2012.	Richard Hannigan, CFOA Chair.
Marketing and Communications – Stakeholder and local employer engagement.	Increase awareness and understanding of SfJ products/services to member organisations and stakeholders. Support the work of the FRSOC sub-Work-streams and expert groups and encourage participation and take up of products and services	Increased awareness of SfJ and share good practice across FRSs Month e-briefs and four quarterly FRS e-brief (news articles to inform FRS employer members and their staff).	April 2011 to March 2012.	Joy Flanagan (CFOA Chair)



We would also like to thank:

- 1. All participants at the CFOA Learning and Development Forum held at the Fire Service College in November 2011. Organisations represented at the event include:
- 2. All organisations that took part in the 2010 Skills Survey conducted by Skills for Justice.
- 3. All organisations that took part in the consultation exercise for the Learning and Development report. The organisations include:

Cegos UK Ltd
Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
London Fire Brigade
Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service
Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
Dorset Fire and Rescue Service
Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service
The Health and Safety Executive
The Welsh Government
Local Government Group
The Fire Service College, Merton-in-Marsh
Department for Communities and Local Government

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Glossary of Acronyms

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ADC	Assessment Development Centres	ICAM	Incident Command Area Manager	NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
AED	Automated External Defibrillator	ICF	Incident Command Foundation	ONS	Office for National Statistics
BA	Breathing Apparatus	ICGM	Incident Command Group Manager	PQA	Personal Qualities and Attributes
BAA	British Airports Authority	ICSM	Incident Command Station Manager	QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework
BAI	Breathing Apparatus Instructor	IES	Institute for Employment Studies	RDS	Retained Duty System
CAD	Computer Aided Dispatch	ILM	Institute of Leadership and Management	RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations
CBRNE	Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear Explosives	IPDS	Integrated Personal Development System	SAS	Scottish Ambulance Service
CFBT	Compartment Fire Behaviour Training	IPDSWSG	Integrated Personal Development System Work Stream Group	SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
CFOA	Chief Fire Officers' Association	IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Planning	SfJ	Skills for Justice
CPI	Consumer Prices Index	IT	Information Technology	SFRA	Scottish Fire and Rescue Authorities
CSR	Comprehensive Spending Review	JOIFF	Joint Occupational Industrial Fire Forum	SFRS	Scottish Fire and Rescue Services
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government	L&D	Learning and Development	SQS	Sector Qualifications Strategy
DFRM	Defence Fire Risk Management	LCMS	Learning Content Management System	SRT	Search and Rescue Team
FBTI	Fire Behaviour Training Instructor	LGA	Local Government Association	SSA	Sector Skills Agreements
FRA	Fire and Rescue Authorities	LGE	Local Government Employers	SSC	Sector Skills Councils
FRS	Fire and Rescue Sector	LGID	Local Government Improvement and Development	SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
FRSOC	Fire and Rescue Sector Occupational Committee	MAGIC	Multi-Agency Gold Incident Command	TFFADL	Trainee Firefighter Assessment and Development Log
GIS	Geographic Information Systems	MPD	Maintenance Phase Development Plan	TNA	Training Needs Analysis
GPS	Global Positioning Systems	NHS	National Health Service	UK	United Kingdom
HART	Hazardous Area Response Team	NIFRS	Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service	ULN	Unique Learner Number
HR	Human Resource	NJC	National Joint Council	VAT	Value Added Tax
HSE	Health and Safety Executive	NOS	National Occupational Standards	WSG	Workstream Group

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